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Daniel James Parkinson

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## ABSTRACT

### THE SYMPHONY OF BEING:

#### *The Transcendental Status of Beauty and its Anthropological Significance in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas*

Daniel James Parkinson

This thesis examines Thomas Aquinas's philosophy of beauty and its significance for the human person's relation to reality. In the first part, I outline Aquinas's general understanding of the transcendentals, and raise the central question concerning their systematic and cumulative order, as they unfold the primal fullness of *being*. I seek to clarify this order by means of Aquinas's discussion concerning the opposition of the *one* and the *many*, and I introduce the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order* as fundamental to his conception of the order among the 'relational' transcendentals, and the distinction of the beautiful among them. In the second part, I confirm the initial conclusion of part one in three stages. First, by comparing the beautiful and the good, in which context I argue that the traditional interpretation of beauty as merely a *species* of the good is mistaken, and I highlight the significance of the 'honourable' as a key category for Aquinas's understanding of beauty. Secondly, by analysis of the distinctive *ratio* of the beautiful in terms of 'brightness' and 'harmony', and the connection between, on the one hand, this Dionysian dual formula and, on the other hand, the Augustinian triad which thematises beauty's place in the systematic order of the relational transcendentals. Thirdly, by highlighting the subtle connection between beauty and *love* in Aquinas's thought, as the anthropological correlate of the ontological argument made in the previous two chapters. Among other things, I conclude that recognition of beauty's transcendental status, and its essential connection with love, is essential to a theological anthropology. Indeed, I argue that Aquinas is a resource for a vision that places beauty at the centre of our encounter with the world, as the wonderful sense of homecoming which enables us to reverentially honour, and take delight in, the harmonic otherness of others *as other*.

THE SYMPHONY OF BEING:  
*The Transcendental Status of Beauty  
and its Anthropological Significance  
in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas*

by

Daniel James Parkinson

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Theology and Religion

Durham University

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### Primary texts

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>De 108 articulis</i>   | <i>Responsio ad magistrum Ioannem de Vercellis de 108 articulis</i> |
| <i>De Pot.</i>            | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de potentia</i>                           |
| <i>De Verit.</i>          | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de veritate</i>                           |
| <i>De virtutibus</i>      | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus</i>                         |
| <i>In Boeth. De trin.</i> | <i>Super Boetium De Trinitate</i>                                   |
| <i>In De div. nom.</i>    | <i>In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus exposito</i>       |
| <i>In De hebdom.</i>      | <i>Expositio libri Boetii De hebdomadibus</i>                       |
| <i>In Ethic.</i>          | <i>Sententia libri Ethicorum</i>                                    |
| <i>In Metaph.</i>         | <i>In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio</i>      |
| <i>In Perih.</i>          | <i>Expositio libri Peryermeneias</i>                                |
| <i>In Phys.</i>           | <i>Commentaria in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis</i>            |
| <i>In Post. Anal.</i>     | <i>Expositio libri Posteriorum</i>                                  |
| <i>In Psalmos.</i>        | <i>In psalmos Davidis expositio</i>                                 |
| <i>In Sent.</i>           | <i>Scriptum super libros sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi</i>   |
| <i>In symb. apost.</i>    | <i>In Symbolum Apostolorum</i>                                      |
| <i>Quodlibet.</i>         | <i>Quaestiones de quodlibet</i>                                     |
| <i>ScG</i>                | <i>Summa contra gentiles</i>  |
| <i>STh</i>                | <i>Summa theologiae</i>   |

### Editions

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Leonine   | <i>Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, opera omnia, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita.</i> Rome: S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1882-.                                   |
| Mandonnet | <i>Scriptum super libros sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi.</i> 4 vols. 1-2, edited by R. P. Mandonnet; 3-4, edited by R. P. Maria Fabianus Moos. Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47. |
| Marietti  | <i>Opera omnia.</i> Turin/Rome: Marietti (dates vary).  |
| Parma     | <i>Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, Ordinis Praedicatorum Opera omnia.</i> Parma: Typis Petri Fiaccadori, 1852-1873.   |

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis articulates the idea of the *symphony of being*: the wonderful and astonishing nature of the gift of created being, revealed specifically in the soul's encounter with the beauty of the other *as other*, that is, in the experience of being's harmonic otherness; something that is not merely registered in the cognitive order of truth, in such a way that it would fail really to move the soul; moreover, something that cannot be reduced to the simple satisfaction of the subject in possessing the good; and yet, something that is always encountered in the experience of joy and delight. This idea will be developed through an extended consideration of the question concerning the transcendental status of the 'beautiful' in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. By way of introduction, first, I will briefly outline the nature and significance of the transcendentals in Aquinas's metaphysical thought. Secondly, I will sketch the basic state of the scholarly question concerning the transcendental status of the beautiful in Aquinas's writings, and the manner in which I will *think with* his thought in relation to this important question. Thirdly, I will explain why the question of beauty is an issue of contemporary significance, especially in relation to the task of being human in the world today. Fourthly, and finally, I will provide an overview of the shape of the present study, and the way in which my thesis will be developed in the chapters that follow.

### *The transcendentals and their significance*

The scholarly influence of Jan A. Aertsen has been considerable in relation to the current understanding of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the thinkers of the

medieval period and beyond.<sup>1</sup> Writing in 1996, he noted that Stanislas Breton's comment of 1963 was still pertinent, namely, that the doctrine of the transcendentals is 'classic yet poorly known'.<sup>2</sup> He also argued that a comprehensive study of Aquinas's understanding of the subject was still lacking, and hoped that his work would fill this lacuna. This intention has certainly been fulfilled, and his work remains indispensable to any discussion of the transcendentals in general, and of their place in the metaphysical thought of Aquinas in particular. For this reason, he will be one of our principal interlocutors in the present study. Now, as Aertsen puts it, the transcendentals are the different *faces* of 'being' (*ens*), they *explicate* the multifaceted nature of this primal and pervasive reality.<sup>3</sup> As Aquinas argues in the *locus classicus* of his treatment of the subject, the transcendentals are 'modes of being' which express something not explicitly expressed by the term 'being' (*ens*) itself, and so they are consequent upon every being simply by virtue of its existence.<sup>4</sup> The transcendentals are identical with being and one another in reality (*secundum rem*), that is, they refer to the same thing in reality, yet they differ from one another in a logical or conceptual sense (*secundum rationem*), that is, they express the various formal aspects of this ubiquitous created perfection. Before we explain this point any further, we can immediately see the metaphysical significance of the transcendentals from this close connection to the notion of being.

The work of the 'Existential Thomists' in the twentieth-century, such as Etienne Gilson, for instance, drew particular attention to the centrality of the 'act of being'

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<sup>1</sup> See Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996). Hereafter, *The Transcendentals*. Cf. *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suarez* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012). Hereafter, *Transcendental Thought*.

<sup>2</sup> Stanislas Breton, 'L'idée de transcendental et la genèse des transcendentaux chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin,' in *Saint Thomas d'Aquin aujourd'hui* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963), 45. Cited in Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 104.

<sup>4</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

(*actus essendi*) in the thought of Aquinas.<sup>5</sup> In his famous formulation, Aquinas states that being (*esse*) is the *actuality of all acts, and therefore the perfection of all perfections*.<sup>6</sup> Being is the most perfect of all things (*perfectissimum omnium*), for it is the *act* of all things:

nothing has actuality except so far as it exists. Hence existence is that which actuates all things, even their forms. Therefore it is not compared to other things as the receiver is to the received; but rather as the received to the receiver. When therefore I speak of the existence of man, or horse, or anything else, existence [*ipsum esse*] is considered a formal principle, and as something received; and not as that which exists.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, Aquinas begins his major derivations of the transcendentals by arguing that there can be nothing extraneous to ‘being in general’ (*ens universale*), there can be no real nature that is outside of its essence, because every nature is essentially a being of some kind.<sup>8</sup> Of course, God is ‘outside’ of the essence of created being, as its cause; he is the one who pre-contains, in a more eminent way, all the perfections of created being in the infinite and immutable simplicity of the divine essence.<sup>9</sup> Whereas created natures are beings by participation, God is essential being, that is, ‘self-subsisting being itself’ (*ipsum esse per se subsistens*).<sup>10</sup> Therefore, no created being possesses being according to the whole power of being, and so *ens universale* is divided into different

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<sup>5</sup> For example, see Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), esp. 62-73, and *Being and Some Philosophers*, Second Edition Corrected and Enlarged (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), esp. 154-89; Cornelio Fabro, *Selected Works of Cornelio Fabro*, Volume 1: Selected Articles on Metaphysics and Participation, Introduced by John Wippel, Edited by Nathaniel Dreyer (Chillum, MD: IVE Press, 2016), esp. 65-103; E. L. Mascall, *He Who Is: A Study In Traditional Theism* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), and *Existence and Analogy: A Sequel To “He Who Is”* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949).

<sup>6</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2 ad 9.

<sup>7</sup> *STh I*, q. 4, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>8</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 21, a. 1. Aquinas also uses the term *ens commune*, which is synonymous with *ens universale*, i.e., the being that all creatures participate, a likeness or similitude of divine being, which does not itself subsist as a being, but is always already ‘given away’ in others. Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 1, a. 1. See note 11 below.

<sup>9</sup> But this also means that God is most intimately present to all beings at every moment of their existence, as the very cause of their innermost being, which is his proper effect, since he is essentially being itself. See *STh I*, q. 8, a. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *STh I*, qq. 3 and 4.

kinds of created beings.<sup>11</sup> For example, a tree shares in a certain perfection and actuality of being that is distinct from that participated by a horse, the two are mutually exclusive of one another, and so a tree has not the being of a horse, and vice versa.<sup>12</sup>

This division of created being into different kinds is systematised by Aristotle's *categories* of 'substance' and 'accidents'.<sup>13</sup> Put simply, a substance is what has being in itself, for instance, a human being, and an accident is what has being in another, for instance, the colour of that person's hair. A substance can undergo various forms of accidental change without ceasing to be the same fundamental reality, for instance, the person's hair turning from black to white. However, a substantial change would represent the cessation of that fundamental reality, for instance, when the person dies, the matter of their body, now no longer informed by the substantial form of the soul, cannot be identified with that person in the same way. As such, the categories divide being into what Aquinas calls 'special' modes of being, that is, into modes of existing that are mutually exclusive of one another, by which we can diversify and classify beings into different grades or genera.<sup>14</sup> For instance, a tree is a substance of one kind and dignity, and a horse is a substance of another, and not all beings are trees or horses. Similarly, the green-ness of the leaves on the tree is one kind of accidental colour, and the brown-ness of the horse's hair is another, and not all beings are green

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<sup>11</sup> ScG I, 28. This is not to say that *ens universale* or *ens commune* exists in itself at one moment, and is then broken up into a multiplicity of different created beings in a subsequent moment. This is what Ferdinand Ulrich calls the 'sense of being', that is, the fact that being itself is never a hypostasis, that there is no moment at which it is 'closed up' in its own glory of simple and infinite actuality, prior to its self-emptying into creatures. See *Homo Abyssus: The Drama of the Question of Being*, trans. David C. Schindler (Washington: Humanum Academic Press, 2018), esp. 24-25, 28-30.

<sup>12</sup> See Rudi te Velde, *Participation and substantiality in Thomas Aquinas*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science' of the Summa Theologiae* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> For Aquinas's discussion of the ten categories or 'predicaments', see *In V Metaph.*, lect. 5 (1763); lect. 9 (889-90); lect. 22 (1126); *In III Phys.*, lect. 5 (322). Cf. J.F. Wippel, 'Thomas Aquinas's Derivation of the Aristotelian Categories (Predicaments),' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987), 13-34.

<sup>14</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

or brown. In other words, the categorial division of being identifies special modes of existing that are not shared in common or general by all beings.

Aquinas clarifies the nature of the transcendentals precisely in contradistinction to these 'special' and categorial modes of being. The transcendentals are 'general' modes of being, that is, they transcend the division of being by the categories, not by moving beyond them into some separate sphere altogether, but by being found in each and every one of the categories, for they are not excluded by the mutual exclusions of the ten genera.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, transcendental predicates such as 'one', 'true', and 'good' *extend* to every category of substance and accidents, that is, they are co-extensive with being and one another. For example, Aquinas argues, since the good expresses the idea of that which is desirable,

Every being, as being, is good. For all being, as being, has actuality and is in some way perfect; since every act implies some sort of perfection; and perfection implies desirability and goodness [...] Hence it follows that every being as such is good.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, the 'good', like 'being', is divided by the ten categories of substance and accidents, it does not belong exclusively to one of these genera, but is found in all of them, for we can speak of a good tree, a good horse, a good shade of green, and so on and so forth. Therefore, Aquinas will often refer to the 'general' modes of being as the *maxime communia*, that is, the most common attributes shared by all beings.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, we must mark a distinction between the *transcendentals*, and that which is wholly *transcendent*, namely God, who transcends *ens commune* as its cause, and so is not found in any genera, but is the principle of all genera.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Aertsen, *Transcendental Thought*, 15-20.

<sup>16</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *In De hebdom.*, lect. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *STh* I, q. 3, a. 5; q. 4, a. 3. Cf. Aertsen, 'The Concept of 'Transcendens' in the Middle Ages,' in *Platonic Ideas and Concept Formation in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, ed. G. Van Riel and C. Macé (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 134-39.

The fundamental significance of the transcendental or general ‘modes of being’ lies in the fact that, as Aquinas puts it, they are consequent upon every being, simply by virtue of being itself.<sup>19</sup> As such, the transcendentals are ‘identical’ with being and with one another in reality (*secundum rem*), and only differ in a logical or conceptual sense (*secundum rationem*).<sup>20</sup> Therefore, if being is the most perfect of all things, because it is the formal principle of actuality which actuates all that *is* in a particular being, then the transcendentals express the inner dimensions of that most intimate and perfect of realities. Being is the unity of creation, that in which all finite creatures share, and so, the transcendentals are the ‘explication’ of what it means to be a being.<sup>21</sup> As Aertsen argues, it is not quite right to designate the transcendentals as ‘properties’ of being, for this makes it sound like they are really distinct from the essence of being itself, even if they always attend upon it.<sup>22</sup> However, because the transcendentals are identical with being according to reality, and differ from it, and one another, only in a logical or conceptual sense, they are not, strictly speaking, properties of being, but rather, the expression of its intrinsic formal diversity. This is an important point in relation to our investigation into the transcendental status of the beautiful, because it means that a transcendental not only transcends the categories, by being found in all of them, but must also express a unique mode of being not articulated by any of the others.<sup>23</sup> As Umberto Eco puts it, each transcendental expresses a different ‘angle’ from which being can be viewed.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *STh I*, q. 5, a. 1: ‘bonum et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed differunt secundum rationem tantum.’

<sup>21</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 97.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>23</sup> To put the point briefly, Aquinas might say at times that all things participate in beauty, that is, that the beautiful transcends the categories and extends to all of them, but this might simply be due to the fact that it is *synonymous* with the good, in which case it would only express what the good expresses, and not be a distinct transcendental itself.

<sup>24</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Hugh Bredin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 21. Hereafter, *The Aesthetics*.

Furthermore, because of their universality and generality, the transcendentals can be attributed to God as divine names.<sup>25</sup> To take the classic example, if we can speak of all created being as participating in the perfection of goodness, then this is a perfection that flows from God, who is the very essence of the good himself. However, the divine name ‘good’ is attributed to God *analogously*, insofar as our knowledge of goodness is derived from creatures, who participate in the good imperfectly, whereas goodness is in God in a more eminent way without any imperfection. Therefore, that which is attributed, the *res significata*, namely, goodness, belongs to God more properly than to creatures, but our understanding of what this term signifies, its *modus significandi*, that is, an imperfect and partial participation in the good, belongs to creatures, and not to God.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, if transcendentals express the created perfections of finite being, as divine names they analogously express the infinite perfection of divine being.<sup>27</sup> However, not all the transcendentals can be applied to the divine essence in quite the same way. For example, the predicate ‘one’ is a negation and expresses the undividedness of a being.<sup>28</sup> As such, this can be applied to God according to the way of remotion or negation, but not, like the good, according to the way of eminence, for it does not signify a perfection of being.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, not all divine names are transcendentals. For example, life is attributed to God – because his very

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<sup>25</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, a. 1, a. 3. The one transcendental that it might seem strange to say this about is ‘something’ (*aliquid*), which, as we will see in chapter three, signifies a being’s *diversity* as a member of a multitude, i.e., some-other-thing (*aliud quid*). Obviously, the divine essence is one and infinite, and not a member of a multitude, and whereas the relation between God and creation is real in the creature, it is only logical in God. See *STh I*, q. 11, a. 3; q. 45, a. 3 ad 1. However, according to our mode of understanding, we can say in an analogical sense that God is something other than creation, in the sense that he is not a part of creation, and that the divine being is distinct from created being. See *STh I*, q. 3, a. 8; *ScG I*, 26.

<sup>26</sup> *STh I*, q. 13, a. 3. For Aquinas’s view of analogy, see John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 543-572; Gregory P. Rocca, O.P., *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), esp. 93-153.

<sup>27</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 378-87; *Transcendental Thought*, 265-71.

<sup>28</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 21, a. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *STh I*, q. 6, a. 3 ad 1. Cf. *STh I*, q. 12, a. 12; q. 13, aa. 1, 2. For the role of Dionysius’s *triplex via* in Aquinas’s thought, see Fran O’Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), esp. 31-41.

nature is his act of understanding, and the power of intellect is the highest principle of self-movement, which, in turn, is that in which life consists<sup>30</sup> – but clearly not every being is alive. The basis of this difference will become clear over the course of this study, and we will return to this point in our conclusion, when we consider the significance of our findings in terms of what it might mean for the ‘beautiful’ to be a divine name. However, the principal importance of the transcendentals that we wish to explore lies in their *anthropological* dimension.

This is particularly foregrounded in Aquinas’s derivation of the transcendentals in the remarkable opening article of *De veritate*.<sup>31</sup> Having made a reduction to the first conception of the human intellect, namely, ‘being’ (*ens*), that to which all other conceptions are reduced, and from which all other conceptions are had by ‘addition’, Aquinas clarifies that the transcendentals *add to being* by expressing ‘general’ modes of being not explicit in the term being itself.<sup>32</sup> This is not a real addition from outside of the essence of being, but a logical addition according to our mode of understanding, and unlike the categorial modes of being, which express ‘special’ modes of being by which things are classified into different genera, the transcendentals express a mode of being that is consequent upon every being, either considered in itself (*in se*), or in relation to another (*in ordine*). Upon this basis Aquinas derives his classic list of five transcendentals: ‘thing’ (*res*), ‘one’ (*unum*), ‘something’ (*aliquid*), ‘good’ (*bonum*), and ‘true’ (*verum*). In addition to ‘being’ (*ens*), which is named from the ‘act of being’ (*actus essendi*), and signifies the *actuality* of a particular being, the first transcendental that Aquinas derives is ‘thing’, which is named from the essence or quiddity of a being, and it signifies the *identity* of that which has being. Next, ‘one’ is a negation which signifies the *indivisibility* of a particular being, and

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<sup>30</sup> See *STh* I, q. 18, a. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. The systematic analysis of this *locus classicus* will form the basis of chapters one and two. For now, we will simply outline its main points.

<sup>32</sup> Aquinas often refers to the transcendentals as the ‘primary’ (*prima*) conceptions of the human intellect. For example, *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad. 6.

'something' is a negation which signifies the *diversity* of a particular being from other beings. We repeat, these are formal aspects that are consequent upon every being.

Having listed two transcendentals that are consequent upon every being considered in itself, one affirmative (*res*), and one negative (*unum*), and one transcendental that is consequent upon every being considered in relation to another (*aliquid*), which is also a negation, Aquinas reaches a decisive moment in his explication. There are some general modes of being consequent upon every being considered in relation which arise from the 'agreement' (*convenientiam*) of one being with another. This is possible, he argues, only if there is something which has the nature to agree with all beings, and this is the soul, *which in a certain manner is all things*.<sup>33</sup> This is a remarkable statement, and it forms the basis of Aquinas's derivation of the 'relational' transcendentals of the 'true', which expresses the agreement of a being with the cognitive power of the soul, according to which the knower is *assimilated* to the thing known, and the 'good', which expresses the agreement of a being with the appetitive power of the soul, according to which the appetible object is *desired*. As Aquinas explains elsewhere, all natural things are determined to their own being and nature by their natural form, and because some inclination always follows upon some form – as fire, by its form, is naturally inclined to rise and generate its like – we can speak of a natural appetite that follows upon all natural forms, leading them to the ends appointed for them by God.<sup>34</sup> However, in those creatures that participate knowledge, their natural form determines the being to its own nature, whilst at the same time creating a receptive space within itself for the forms or *species* of other beings, upon which follows an appetite above the level of natural appetite, by which the subject can desire what it apprehends. In other words, because the human intellect is capable of receiving the intelligible *species* of all things, by which it is assimilated to, and is in act as understanding by, their forms, it can 'inwardly read' (*intus legere*) and

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<sup>33</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 1. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1.

penetrate into the very essence of things, while at the same time being inwardly transformed by that which it knows.<sup>35</sup> It is in this sense that *anima* is in a manner all things, for it is a form that can receive an intelligible likeness of the forms of all things.<sup>36</sup> As Josef Pieper has so beautifully written, the depth of this interior receptivity means a more extensive and comprehensive realm of relatedness to that which is other, so that the human soul is related not simply to an immediate environment of physical and sensible needs, but to a *world*, for it is *capax universi*, capable of knowing the totality of things in their universality.<sup>37</sup>

The transcendental predicate 'true' expresses the fact that every being without remainder is potentially related to the human intellect and can be received into the soul *as known*. Upon this fundamental relation follows the appetitive movement of the soul outward toward the world that is known, so that the real existence of others may also be received in ways that complete and perfect the actuality of the subject.<sup>38</sup> This outward relation of the soul to being is expressed by the transcendental predicate 'good', which signifies that every being without remainder is potentially an object of desire for the human will.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, the importance of the transcendentals lies in the fact that they express something fundamental to the nature of every being, *and* the essential way in which human beings relate to this world of beings. As such, the 'relational' transcendentals of the true and the good take on a particular importance, for they are relations that arise from the uniqueness of the human soul. Human beings

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<sup>35</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 8, a. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *STh* I, q. 85, aa. 1 and 2. Cf. *STh* I, q. 16, a. 3: 'quod anima est quodammodo omnia secundum sensum et intellectum.'

<sup>37</sup> Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth: The Truth of All Things and Reality and the Good*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), esp. 77-91. We might also add that the soul is capable of knowing being in its most universal aspect, i.e., divine being.

<sup>38</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, aa. 1 & 3.

<sup>39</sup> Fundamentally, these relations are rooted in the fact that every being is essentially related to the divine intellect, as to that truth from which it proceeds, and also to the divine will, which directs all things towards its own goodness. See *STh* I, q. 22, a. 1, for example. Therefore, the only reason that we can perceive the truth and goodness of particular beings is because the human soul is capable of seeing the singular against the backdrop of a transcendental horizon of the True and the Good, to which it is naturally oriented as towards its final end. As Aquinas puts it, natural things are placed *between* two intellects (*res naturalis inter duos intellectus constituta*), the divine and the human. See *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 2.

are *rational* animals, and so the relation to being in the order of the true is the bedrock of their distinctive relatedness to being. Following upon this is a relation in the order of the good, by which human beings can desire what they apprehend. However, this raises one of the central questions of this study: *is the relation of desire the only way in which the human soul can relate to that which it apprehends?* This is to raise the question concerning the transcendental status of the 'beautiful'.

### *The beautiful and the thought of Thomas Aquinas*

According to his classic definition, Aquinas states that we call those things 'beautiful' which *please when seen*.<sup>40</sup> Elsewhere, he states that it pertains to the nature or *ratio* of the beautiful that it calms and brings the appetite to rest simply in being seen or known, so that it is *that of which the very apprehension pleases*.<sup>41</sup> The reference to vision or sight has led some to conclude that Aquinas only has a conception of sensible beauty, in which case it could not be a transcendental, because it would not belong to spiritual beings, and so it would not extend to as many things as being does.<sup>42</sup> However, it is clear that whilst the word *visio* is derived from sensible knowledge, it is extended by Aquinas to encompass intellectual knowledge of spiritual or intelligible realities too.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Aquinas explicitly states that the beautiful brings rest to the appetite by being seen *or* known (*cognitione*), so that it is that of which the *apprehension* pleases, a term that extends to intellectual knowledge as well as sensible knowledge.

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<sup>40</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1: 'pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent.'

<sup>41</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3: 'rationem pulchri pertinet quod in eius aspectu seu cognitione quietetur appetitus ... pulchrum autem dicatur id cuius ipsa apprehensio placet.'

<sup>42</sup> For example, Horst Seidl, 'Sulla questione se il bello sia un trascendentale,' *Aquinas: Revisita Internazionale di Filosofia* 53 (2010), 258-60.

<sup>43</sup> *STh* I, q. 67, a. 1. We might also note that the *visio Dei* consists in the knowledge of infinitely self-subsisting being itself.

Therefore, Aquinas's conception of the beautiful is not limited to sensible things, but also extends to spiritual or intelligible beauty too.<sup>44</sup>

Another misconception about these definitions is that they introduce a subjective condition, by including a reference to the pleasure experienced by the one apprehending the beautiful.<sup>45</sup> However, Aquinas's definition of the beautiful is not subjectivist, but *per posteriora*, that is, it is derived from the proper effect of the beautiful, in the same way as Aristotle's definition of the good, as *that which all desire*, is derived from the proper effect of the good.<sup>46</sup> It is not that something is good because it is desired, but rather, it is desired because it is good. Likewise, Aquinas argues that something is not beautiful because we love it, rather, it is loved by us because it is beautiful and good.<sup>47</sup> In his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he explains that, in the case of the good, such *per posteriora* definitions are necessary because the transcendentals are *prima*, that is, the first conceptions of the human intellect; as such, they cannot be defined by anything prior to themselves, but only by that which follows upon them.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, upon the good follows a relation of desire, and upon the apprehension of the beautiful follows a relation of pleasure. As G. B. Phelan puts it, the beautiful, like the true and the good, is not *relative*, but *relational*.<sup>49</sup>

This is not to say that all desire the same thing, nor find pleasure in apprehending the same thing – the good and the beautiful are not objective in this sense – rather, the objectivity of the good and the beautiful is to be located in the *structure* of the transcendental relation between subject and object. For all, the good is experienced in a relation of appetency or desire, and for all who experience the

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<sup>44</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2. Aquinas argues that all things participate in spiritual beauty insofar as their form is a brightness that irradiates from the divine brightness. See *In De div. nom.*, IV, 5 (355).

<sup>45</sup> Eco, *The Aesthetics*, 44.

<sup>46</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 337.

<sup>47</sup> *In De div. nom.*, IV, 10 (439).

<sup>48</sup> *In I Ethic.*, lect. 1 (9).

<sup>49</sup> G. B. Phelan, 'The Concept of Beauty in St. Thomas Aquinas,' in *Aspects of the New Scholastic Philosophy*, ed. Charles A. Hart (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1932), 121-45: 127-30.

beautiful, it is in the relation of an apprehension that is itself pleasing.<sup>50</sup> Another interesting similarity between the beautiful and the good is that their contraries are not beings, but privations in a certain being. As evil is a privation of the good, a lack of perfection and actuality in being, similarly, Aquinas explains that ugliness is a privation of the beautiful, which he defines in terms of the deformity of a being's parts.<sup>51</sup> We will return to this important subject in the chapters which follow, but for now it suffices to note the way that the beautiful and its contrary are defined.<sup>52</sup> However, our immediate concern is to say something about the fact that the status of the beautiful in Aquinas's thought is a contested question.

The notion of beauty was one of central importance in ancient Greek thought. For instance, it plays a particularly important role in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, and in Plotinus's *Enneads*.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, Dionysius treats at length the attribution of beauty to God in Book IV of his *On the Divine Names*.<sup>54</sup> However, it would be fair to say that Aristotle devoted less attention to the beautiful than the philosophers of the Platonic tradition.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, it is significant, as Aertsen highlights, that the medieval

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<sup>50</sup> Aquinas argues that one of the things that distinguishes divine beauty from created beauty is that the former is free from the privations suffered by the latter, which include the fact that some things are held to be beautiful by some and not others, or at one time and not another. See *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (345). Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 4.

<sup>51</sup> *In De div. nom.*, IV, 21 (554); *De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 9 ad 16.

<sup>52</sup> In other words, it underlines the foundation of the beautiful in being itself. Cf. *In De div. nom.*, IV, 5 (349): 'claritas enim est de consideratione pulchritudinis, ut dictum est; *omnis autem forma, per quam res habet esse, est participatio quaedam divinae claritatis; et hoc est quod subdit, quod singula sunt pulchra secundum propriam rationem, idest secundum propriam formam; unde patet quod ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur.*'

<sup>53</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, 237d-238c; 250b-e, and *Symposium*, 204d; Plotinus, *Enneads* III.5.1. This tradition was not without a sense of the paradoxical and challenging nature of beauty. For example, in Plato's *Hippias Major*, 304e, Socrates says, 'So I think, Hippias, that I have been benefited by conversation with both of you; for I think I know the meaning of the proverb 'beautiful things are difficult.''

<sup>54</sup> Dionysius, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid, with a foreword, notes, and translation collaboration by Paul Rorem, preface by René Roques, and intro. by Jaroslav Pelikan, Jean Leclercq, and Karlfried Froelich, *Classics of Western Spirituality*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1987). There was a very close connection between the beautiful and the good in ancient Greek thought, which can be seen from the fact that they were often brought together in a single notion, namely, *kalokagathia*. See Aertsen, 'Beauty and the Middle Ages: A Forgotten Transcendental?' *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 1 (1991), 81. Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1 obj. 4.

<sup>55</sup> D.C. Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament: Rediscovering the Real in Beauty, Goodness, and Truth* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018), 104, n. 69.

doctrine of the transcendentals coincides with the moment at which the reception of Aristotle precipitated a challenge to account for the foundations of a philosophical explanation of the world.<sup>56</sup> This might be one of the reasons why the beautiful (*pulchrum*) is not included in any of the major lists of the transcendentals in the Middle Ages.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, the only writing in the thirteenth century that explicitly states the transcendental status of the beautiful is an anonymous treatise whose authorship is far from certain.<sup>58</sup> For this reason, Gilson has characterised the beautiful in medieval thought as the ‘forgotten transcendental’.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Aertsen contends that, for Aquinas, the subject of beauty is a marginal concern.<sup>60</sup> It is not mentioned in his lists of the transcendentals, nowhere does he devote a separate *quaestio* to the subject, and never is it explicitly stated as a distinct transcendental that expresses a unique ‘mode of being’. Instead, Aquinas only ever speaks of the beautiful as making an ‘addition’ to *the good*, and not to being.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, he argues that Aquinas’s two major discussions of the beautiful in the *Summa theologiae*, for instance, suggest that it is

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<sup>56</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 20-21.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 347-51. Cf. Aertsen, ‘Beauty and the Middle Ages,’ 86-90. See note 55 above.

<sup>58</sup> The text is edited by D. Halcour, ‘*Tractatus de transcendentalibus entis conditionibus* (Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale, Codex 186)’, in: *Franziskanische Studien* 41 (1959), 41-106. Aertsen discusses this text in *The Transcendentals*, 350-51. He also gives an illuminating discussion of John of La Rochelle’s comparison between the beautiful and the good, and notes that this comparison did not result in the inclusion of the former along with the latter in the list of the transcendentals. See ‘Beauty in the Middle Ages,’ 87-89.

<sup>59</sup> Etienne Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 159-63.

<sup>60</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 335.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 344. Cf. Cajetan Chereso argues that the transcendentals listed in *De veritate* 1.1 follow upon being immediately, whereas beauty is a ‘mediate’ transcendental which flows from being *through* the good. See, *The Virtue of Honor and Beauty According to St. Thomas Aquinas: An Analysis of Moral Beauty* (River Forest, IL: The Aquinas Library, 1960), 29. Likewise, Mark D. Jordan argues that ‘beauty is a transcendental of the good.’ See, ‘The Evidence of the Transcendentals and the Place of Beauty in Thomas Aquinas,’ in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, Issue No. 116 (December 1989), 393-407; 399. Cf. Kevin E. O’Reilly, *Aesthetic Perception: A Thomistic Perspective*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 103-11. Christopher Scott Sevier comments that if beauty is such a ‘supernumerary transcendental’, it seems to be the only one of its kind. See, *Aquinas on Beauty* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 144, n. 163. However, surely this begs the question as to whether such a category exists at all, and whether, in fact, the beautiful is not rather simply a transcendental. Finally, Alice Ramos states that she does not wish to enter into the question of whether beauty is a separate transcendental alongside truth and goodness, and refers her reader to Aertsen’s discussion of this issue instead. See *Dynamic Transcendentals: Truth, Goodness and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 71-72, n. 4.

simply a ‘specification’ of the good.<sup>62</sup> It cannot be a transcendental that makes a unique ‘addition’ to being, he argues, because the beautiful adds to the good a relation to the cognitive power, and the knowability of being is what the true ‘adds’ to being.<sup>63</sup> Aertsen concludes, then, that the specific place of the beautiful in the thought of Aquinas is what we might call the ‘extension’ of the true to the good.<sup>64</sup> That is, the beautiful is a function of the mutual ‘inclusion’ of the true and the good, it is the ‘true taken as good’, the object of a special kind of knowledge that we might call ‘affective’, which is analogous to the object of the practical intellect.<sup>65</sup> In chapter five, we will examine whether or not, for Aquinas, the beautiful is ultimately reducible to the true and the good, and their mutual coinherence, in the way that Aertsen contends it is.

Aertsen’s arguments would seem to confirm the conclusion arrived at by one of Aquinas’s most important early interpreters, Thomas Cajetan, O.P., namely, that the beautiful is merely a ‘species of the good’ (*quaedam boni species*), a view that has undoubtedly influenced subsequent thinkers in the debate concerning beauty.<sup>66</sup> And yet, Aertsen notes that there has been a trend among modern scholars to claim that the beautiful does, in fact, have a transcendental status for Aquinas.<sup>67</sup> In large part, this was inspired, he claims, by Jacques Maritain’s *Art and Scholasticism*, which was originally published in 1920, and his characterisation of the beautiful as ‘the splendour of all the transcendentals together.’<sup>68</sup> Maritain contended that the omission of the

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<sup>62</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 347.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 344. Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3: ‘pulchrum addit supra bonum, quendam ordinem ad vim cognoscitivam’. However, this assumes that the relation of the beautiful to the cognitive power is the same as that of the true. Against this idea see Armand A. Maurer, *About Beauty: A Thomistic Interpretation* (Houston, Texas: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1983), esp. 32-38.

<sup>64</sup> Aertsen, ‘Beauty in the Middle Ages,’ 90-97; *The Transcendentals*, 354-59.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Breton describes the beautiful as a ‘mixture’ of the true and the good. See, ‘L’idée de transcendental,’ 56. Likewise, Leo Elders argues that the beautiful arises from a ‘combination’ of these two, which is why it is not mentioned as a distinct transcendental by Aquinas. See, *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 142.

<sup>66</sup> Cajetan makes this statement in his commentary on *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 3 ad 1, which can be found in *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, vol. 6 (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1891), 192.

<sup>67</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 363.

<sup>68</sup> Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism: with other essays*, trans. J.F. Scanlan (London: Sheed & Ward, 1946), 132, n. 63b. Cf. G.B. Phelan, ‘The Concept of Beauty.’ The view that the beautiful ends the list of the transcendentals as their final synthesis was first suggested by B.G. Paredes, ‘Ideas estéticas

beautiful from the classic list in *De veritate* 1.1 is not problematic, because it can be reduced to the good. However, even from our brief introduction thus far, it is clear that this argument is self-evidently unsatisfactory, for the transcendentals express unique and distinct ‘modes of being’, by which they are formally distinct from one another *secundum rationem*, whilst also being identical *secundum rem*. Transcendental beauty cannot simply be the synthesis of the other transcendentals, or merely reducible to one of them, without making its own unique conceptual addition to being. Winfried Czapiewski advances an inversion of Maritain’s position, and argues that the beautiful does not belong at the end of the list, but is the original unity (the ‘Urmodus’), not of all the transcendentals, but of the true and the good.<sup>69</sup> This is a hidden origin, he argues, and so the beautiful only comes to light in the distinct powers of intellect and will, it can only be grasped through the true and the good, which is why it is not included in the list of the transcendentals by Aquinas.<sup>70</sup>

Another major contribution to the debate identified by Aertsen is that of Francis J. Kovach, who, like Maritain, holds that the beautiful is the most comprehensive of all the transcendentals, for it includes all the others.<sup>71</sup> He contends that Aquinas only arrived at an insight into the transcendental of the beautiful ten years after writing *De veritate*, in the process of preparing his commentary upon Dionysius’s *On the Divine*

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de Santo Tomás,’ *La ciencia tomista* 2 (1910-11), 345. This view can also be found in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Les perfections divines* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1936), 299.

<sup>69</sup> Winfried Czapiewski, *Das Schöne bei Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), esp. 121-31, 140. Cf. Gunther Pöltner, *Schönheit. Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung des Denkens bei Thomas von Aquin* (Vienna: Herder, 1978), 76.

<sup>70</sup> As we will see in chapter one, this is inadmissible according to Aquinas’s understanding of the transcendentals, because being (*ens*) is the primal unity and origin from which all the other transcendentals unfold, as from their principle, in which they are contained unitedly and indistinctly, and from which they unfold in an order where the posterior includes what is conceptually in the prior, and not vice versa as Czapiewski argues. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 352-53. Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 3, a. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Francis J. Kovach, *Die Ästhetik des Thomas von Aquin* (Berlin and New York, 1961), 214. Cf. ‘The Transcendental of Beauty in Thomas Aquinas’, in P. Wilpert (ed.), *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter* (Miscellanea Mediaevalia vol. 2), [Berlin, 1963], 392. According to Kovach, the modern debate concerning the status of the beautiful began in the late nineteenth-century with the publication of Josef Jungmann’s *Aesthetik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1884), 162, whose declaration that beauty is a transcendental provoked a vehement rejection from several of his contemporaries.

*Names*, which is why it is not included in the classic lists.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, Kovach believes that there is space for the beautiful at the end of the list, where it has a synthetic function, expressing the relation of being to the two faculties of the soul taken not separately, but *jointly*.<sup>73</sup> This is an interesting proposal, especially because one of Aertsen's arguments is based upon the fact that there is not a third spiritual power of the soul to which the beauty of being might relate.<sup>74</sup> The idea of a transcendental that relates simultaneously to the two powers of the soul is one that we will explore in this study. However, we will also question whether such a transcendental comes at the end of the list, or whether its place might not rather be between the true and the good – a relation of being to one power *through* the other perhaps – as that which effects the connection between these two orders and their actualisation in the operations of the soul.<sup>75</sup>

Ultimately, Aertsen suggests that the trend in modern scholarship to view the beautiful as a transcendental in the thought of Aquinas, and in the Middle Ages more generally, is due to the towering influence of Hans Urs von Balthasar, whose work

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<sup>72</sup> Kovach, *Die Ästhetik*, 75-76, 183.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-14; 'The Transcendentality of Beauty,' 391-92. Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 351-53. Piotr Jaroszyński also argues that the beautiful expresses a single relation to both powers of intellect and will. See *Beauty and Being: Thomistic Perspectives*, trans. Hugh McDonald with the collaboration of the author (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2011), 195. It seems that Jaroszyński is ignorant of Aertsen's work, which, at the very least is not listed in the bibliography of the work just cited.

<sup>74</sup> Aertsen, 'Beauty in the Middle Ages,' 94. Some have posited a third power of *sensibility* to which the beautiful relates. For example, Gilson argues that 'the beautiful is the good of sense knowledge for the sensibility of an intelligent being.' *The Arts of the Beautiful* (Washington, D.C.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 28. However, this would restrict the beautiful to that which can be apprehended through the senses, and so there would be no space for purely spiritual beauty, not to mention the fact that God could not be said to be beautiful in any meaningful way in this case. A similar proposal is made by Jacques Maritain's discussion of poetic intuition and knowledge in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry: The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, National Gallery of Arts, Washington* (London: The Harvill Press, 1954), 106-45.

<sup>75</sup> Such an *integrative* characteristic of the beautiful is suggested by Michael M. Waddell, 'Integrating Beauty: Reflections on the Psychology, Ontology, and Etiology of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* 1.5.4,' *The Saint Anselm Journal* 8.1 (Fall 2012). Cf. 'Truth or Transcendentals: What Was St. Thomas's Intention at *De Veritate* 1.1?,' *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 197-219. Waddell argues that the beautiful is not included in the list at *De veritate* 1.1 because Aquinas's intention was to define the nature of truth, and not to give an exhaustive doctrine of the transcendentals. Therefore, only those transcendentals which are necessary to bring out the *ratio* of the true are elaborated.

gave rise to an 'aesthetic interest'.<sup>76</sup> However, he argues, the idea of aesthetics as an independent philosophical discipline only arose in the eighteenth-century, along with the idea of the triad 'true-good-beautiful', which reached its conclusion in the work of Immanuel Kant, where it serves as the basis of his three *Critiques* of Pure Reason (the true), Practical Reason (the good), and Judgement (the beautiful).<sup>77</sup> Whilst Balthasar's major concern was certainly not aesthetics *per se*, far less what he called 'Aesthetic Theology',<sup>78</sup> he does famously reverse the Kantian order of the above triad in his monumental *Trilogy*, in which he attempts to articulate Christian theology according to the transcendental order of the beautiful, the good, and the true.<sup>79</sup> Aertsen contends that, under the additional influence of Maritain, there has been a tendency to project this Kantian influence backwards onto Aquinas himself.<sup>80</sup>

Now, it lies well beyond the scope of the present study to evaluate these claims, or to enter into a proper discussion about the intellectual history of the transcendentals in general, or the beautiful in particular. Nevertheless, whether or not one agrees with Aertsen's historical or philosophical conclusions, his intervention in the debate has undoubtedly brought about a great degree of clarity, for he has established the essential 'guideline' for determining whether the beautiful is a transcendental or not:

the question as to the transcendentality of the beautiful cannot be resolved until it has become clear what universal mode of *being* the beautiful expresses that is not yet expressed by the other transcendentals, and what its place is in the order of these properties.<sup>81</sup>

In what follows, we shall endeavour to meet the requirements of this guideline.

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<sup>76</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 353.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>78</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, Vol. I: Seeing the Form, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio S.J. and John Riches (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 79.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, Foreword. This is also a reversal of Aquinas's ordering of the true and the good.

<sup>80</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 354. Aertsen (*ibid.*, n. 62) notes that in *Art and Scholasticism*, 124-28, n. 55, Maritain discusses *Summa theologiae* I, 5.4 ad 1, a crucial passage on the nature of the beautiful, from the perspective of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, *The Transcendentals*, 337. Cf. *Transcendental Thought*, 176.

However, our principal concern is not to determine the *historical* question of whether Aquinas explicitly thought that the beautiful is a transcendental or general ‘mode of being’. For what it is worth, Aertsen’s arguments demonstrate that, even if Aquinas did not explicitly rule out the transcendental of the beautiful, he also did not find a way to integrate it into his systematic account of the transcendentals. The most obvious indication of this is that it is never included in any of his lists, and neither does he ever explicitly state that it makes a distinct addition to being, either before or after his commentary upon Dionysius’s *On the Divine Names*. Rather, our study will be of a *systematic* nature. As such, we will seek to explore the implications of Aquinas’s general metaphysical thought, and the way in which the specific statements he makes about the nature of the beautiful fit within that overall structure. Our aim will be to conduct a deep engagement with the inner logic of his thought so that we can think about the beautiful *from within* that perspective. As such, we will argue that the beautiful is implicitly a transcendental in Aquinas’s thought, regardless of whether he consciously held that position himself in an explicit manner.<sup>82</sup> In this respect, we will take an approach that is similar to that which we find in the recent work of David C. Schindler. Put simply, although we may find aspects in Aquinas’s work that tend in the direction of denying the transcendental status of the beautiful – for instance, the fact that it is never included in any of his lists – nevertheless, when we dig below the surface of his thought, we find other aspects that tend in another direction.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps

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<sup>82</sup> Eco argued that the beautiful is implicitly a transcendental for Aquinas, but that his account is filled with uncertainty and hesitation. See, *The Aesthetics*, 118-19. Cf. Daniel Parkinson, ‘The Implicit Transcendental: Beauty and the Trinity in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas,’ *The Thomist* 87 (2023): 415-49.

<sup>83</sup> For example, David C. Schindler, ‘Love and Beauty: the “Forgotten Transcendental” in Thomas Aquinas,’ *Communio* 44 (Summer 2017): 334-356. Cf. *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 85-117. Schindler’s work in this field is extensive and highly illuminating. However, many of his writings are synthetic, insofar as they attempt to bring Thomistic insights within the overall framework of Balthasar’s thought, which differs from that of Aquinas in some crucial respects. The most obvious of these is the ordering of the transcendentals. Whereas it is fundamental to Aquinas’s metaphysics that the true precedes the good, this order is reversed by Balthasar, who also places the beautiful before the good. Likewise, Schindler develops Balthasar’s idea of the primacy of being’s ‘self-showing’ in the moment of beauty, suggesting that this is the mode of being’s *appearance*, namely, the giving of a form that is apprehended as beautiful, and not as intelligible *per se* as in the order of the true. This, he argues,

this raises the question as to whether Aquinas is the best thinker to turn to in relation to the status and nature of the beautiful. However, my contention is that the quality of his metaphysical thought in general is so clear and systematic that a decisive conclusion impresses itself with a subtle and elegant fittingness: *the beautiful occupies an implicit but essential place within the systematic order of the transcendentals, even if that place is not explicitly stated by Aquinas himself.*

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the way that the Augustinian triad *mode-species-order*, or *measure-number-weight*, thematises a certain threefold structure in Aquinas's thinking about the transcendentals.<sup>84</sup> For instance, he employs this triad

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is an encounter between the two freedoms of subject and object, which 'pre-contains' the orders of the good and the true, not in their consummate modes of desire and knowledge, but in an incipient manner, which forms the fundamental context in which these relations unfold in their own proper orders. Because this is a reception of form, and therefore an apprehension of some kind, the reversal of the true and the good avoids the voluntarism of a desire without a prior act of cognition. Likewise, Schindler argues that this order accounts for the fact that our apprehension of being is in the first instance *mediate*, that is, it is an encounter with the way in which reality freely gives itself to us, as opposed to *immediate*, or in itself. In other words, we encounter first the superficial and accidental dimensions of being's self-showing, before penetrating by acts of intellect into its inner essence. Again, this is a quite different conception from that held by Aquinas, for whom all kinds of knowledge, however confused or imperfect, belong to the knowability of being, which falls under the *ratio* of the true. As he puts it at the beginning of his commentary on the creed, our knowledge is so weak that no philosopher will ever be able to perfectly investigate the nature of a single fly (see *In symb. apost.*, 1). See Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, esp. 31-48, 100-106; *The Catholicity of Reason* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), esp. 58-115; *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth: A Philosophical Investigation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 350-421.

It lies beyond the scope of the present study to enter into a discussion with Schindler's work insofar as he brings Aquinas's thought into dialogue with that of Balthasar. Nevertheless, we will take inspiration from Schindler's approach insofar as he seeks to find the inner logic of Aquinas's thought, even if that logic seems to be in tension with certain statements made by Aquinas himself. In this respect, Schindler's work on the correlation between love and beauty will be particularly important. Moreover, we will argue that his argument concerning this latter subject actually supports the Thomist ordering of the transcendentals, and reveals that beauty lies at the *heart* of being, presupposing the true, and preceding the good.

<sup>84</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6; *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5; *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 4. This triad is ultimately derived from the Book of Wisdom (xi. 21): 'But you have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.' This text was especially important for Augustine's doctrine of creation (e.g., *De genesi ad litteram* 4.3.7-4.7.14). The formulation is synonymous with *mode-species-order*, which we find in Augustine's early texts, such as *De natura boni* 3, in which he argues that where they are absent there is no nature, such that all nature is constituted as good by them. This is an important text for Aquinas (e.g., *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5 s.c.). For an extensive discussion of this theme in Augustine see W.J. Roche, 'Measure, Number and Weight in St. Augustine,' *New Scholasticism* 15 (1941), 350-76, and for the significance of this trio in relation to his aesthetics and doctrine of the Trinity see Carol Harrison, 'Measure, Number and Weight in Saint Augustine's Aesthetics,' *Augustinianum* 28.3 (1988), 591-602.

explicitly when he delineates the three constituent features in which the intrinsic essence or *ratio* of the good consists. We will elaborate this more fully in subsequent chapters, but to put the matter simply: the good consists in (1) *species*, which is the form by which a certain being is what it is, substance or accident; (2) *mode*, which is the measure by which its presupposed act of being is received in that form, so that the two are commensurate or harmonious with one another; and (3) *order*, which is the relation that follows upon that being in the order of final causality, whereby it is perfective in relation to others – on different occasions, Aquinas foregrounds one of the two terms in this relation of order, that is, either, the good being itself, which stands towards another as an end that perfects, or, the being that seeks the good, which by the operation proper to its form seeks its own perfection.<sup>85</sup> As we noted in Aquinas’s explanation of the definition of the good *per posteriora*, as one of the *prima* the good cannot be defined by anything prior to it, so it must be defined from its proper effect. However, as Aertsen argues, there is a systematic order to the transcendentals, in which the posterior conceptually includes what is prior. Given that the good is the final transcendental in the list, it is my contention that these three Augustinian notes thematise the way in which the transcendentals unfold from being in a cumulative and systematic order.

As such, among the relational transcendentals, the true comes first, which Aquinas defines as the ‘conformity’ of intellect with ‘thing’ (*res*), which, in turn, is named from the essence, quiddity, or form of a being, and so the true is constituted by the note of *species*, which signifies a being’s form.<sup>86</sup> Next is the beautiful, which is constituted by the addition to *species* of the note of *mode*, which signifies the commensuration and inner harmony of a thing’s being with its form, an existential dimension that places the beautiful in the appetitive order of pleasure, whilst also

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<sup>85</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5; *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6.

<sup>86</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 21, a. 6 ad 3: ‘Ex ipsa igitur specie tantum constituitur ratio veri’.

being essentially related to the cognitive order of form.<sup>87</sup> Aquinas usually follows Dionysius in also defining the *ratio* of the beautiful in terms of ‘brightness’ (*claritas*) and ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*) or ‘due proportion’ (*debita proportio*),<sup>88</sup> the first of which we will argue corresponds with *species* or form, and the second of which we will argue corresponds with *mode* or measure. Finally, there is the good, which is constituted by the addition to *species* and *mode* of the note of *order*, which signifies the way in which a being can be perfective of another according to both the notes of *species* and *mode*.<sup>89</sup> Primarily, it will be through the lens of this threefold Augustinian framework that we will seek to elaborate the inner logic of Aquinas’s metaphysical thought, and the implicit place of the beautiful within that structure.

### *The significance of beauty*

Of course, we must also ask the question of whether it matters if the beautiful is a transcendental or not. Some scholars writing after Aertsen’s work have argued that it does not, and that because the beautiful is a combination of the true and the good, as Aertsen suggests, it is still co-extensive with being.<sup>90</sup> However, the problem with this view is that it means that the beautiful does not express something that is not already expressed by either the true or the good, or their relation to one another. For, the transcendentals express distinct ‘modes of being’ consequent upon every being *qua*

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<sup>87</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 12: ‘pulchrum quidem, in quantum est in seipso modificatum et specificatum, quod in ratione boni includitur; sed bonum addit ordinem perfectivi ad alia.’ Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 344.

<sup>88</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

<sup>89</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6: ‘Ita igitur unumquodque bonum, in quantum est perfectivum secundum rationem speciei et esse simul, habet modum, speciem et ordinem. Speciem quidem quantum ad ipsam rationem speciei; modum quantum ad esse; ordinem quantum ad ipsam habitudinem perfectivi.’ We will also argue that the transcendentals *res*, *unum*, and *aliquid* can be mapped onto this threefold scheme, and in such a way that they form particular connections with *verum*, *pulchrum*, and *bonum*, respectively, as the presupposed aspects of being to which the human soul relates at the level of the relational transcendentals.

<sup>90</sup> O’Reilly, *Aesthetic Perception*, 111; Sevier, *Aquinas on Beauty*, 126-27.

being, and so, as Eco argues, if the beautiful is in fact a transcendental, then the universe acquires a further perfection.<sup>91</sup> That is, the beautiful is either a distinct *revelation* of being, or it is not, and if it is, then it is also a distinct revelation of human being, and ultimately, of divine being in an analogous sense. As mentioned above, our concern in this study is principally the way in which a certain anthropology emerges from Aquinas's metaphysical thought in relation to the transcendentals, and so, let us think about the importance of the beautiful from this perspective.

If the beautiful does not represent a distinct transcendental 'mode of being', then the only relations of the human soul to being are those which are found in the orders of the true and the good. That is, we can either *know* reality, or *desire* it. At face value, this might not seem problematic. The knowledge we have in the order of the true is the fundamental basis for our encounter with the world. It is that by which the soul is in a manner all things, whereby we are opened up to the world of others. As such, the order of the true foregrounds the intrinsic intelligibility of creation, and the fact that the mind is at home in the world.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, our desire for the being of other things is essential to the nature of finite creatures, which fulfil their natures in the passage from potentiality to actuality. As such, the order of the good foregrounds the inherent appetibility of finite being, that God has placed his creatures in an order wherein they can be given to one another, in order to give pleasure and to perfect one another, as a sign of his own goodness to us. However, what this account leaves out is another kind of relation, which would be both cognitive and appetitive, in which the apprehension of another not only gives us knowledge, but also delight, not because that other is an end that we can pursue for our own gratification, but simply because our apprehension of them evokes a sense of joy that they exist as an end in themselves.<sup>93</sup> In other words, this would be a way of relating to reality in such a way

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<sup>91</sup> Eco, *The Aesthetics*, 22.

<sup>92</sup> Jordan, 'The Evidence of the Transcendentals,' 401.

<sup>93</sup> As Josef Pieper has argued, this is the disposition of love which is manifest in the affirmation, 'It's good that you exist; it's good that you are in this world!' See *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997 and 2012), 164.

that it repeats the gesture of creation itself, that is, the utterly gratuitous act by which self-subsisting being gives existence to that which is nothing in itself, not because of any need or lack, but simply for the joy of letting the other *be*.<sup>94</sup> As such, the beautiful represents the importance of difference, as well as unity, within the realm of created being. It is my contention that our anthropology will be woefully inadequate without this additional relation in the order of the beautiful. Let us consider this for a moment by turning to a fundamental source for Christian theological anthropology, the story of the Garden of Eden in the second and third chapters of the Book of Genesis.

After forming man from the dust of the ground and breathing life into his nostrils, God plants a garden and fills it with every tree that is both *pleasant to the sight*, and also *good for food*. In the middle of the garden, he places the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with four rivers flowing out of Eden to water the garden. Man is placed in the garden to till it and keep it, and he is commanded to eat freely of every tree of the garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, whose fruit, if eaten, will lead to death.<sup>95</sup> As Alexander Schmemmann has put it, 'the whole world is presented as one all-embracing banquet table for man', who must take the world into his body and transform it into his flesh and blood.<sup>96</sup> Every tree is both beautiful and good, and it is given to man for food that it may become his life. All except one. As the woman sees, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a delight to the eyes, but she was deceived into thinking that it was also good for food and to be desired to make one wise.<sup>97</sup> However, God had not given this tree to be an object of desire. What this tree represents is that, in the midst of a world full of created things that are generously given so that they can be consumed, at the centre of human existence there lies something which must be related to at a certain distance. This is a

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<sup>94</sup> See Rowan Williams, 'Good for nothing?', *Augustinian Studies* 25, (1994): 9-24.

<sup>95</sup> Genesis ii. 7-17.

<sup>96</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, Second, revised and expanded edition (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 11. Schmemmann also notes that this protological image of the world as a banquet table is taken up into the eschatological imagery of the messianic banquet.

<sup>97</sup> Genesis iii. 6.

tree whose fruit cannot be consumed. Therefore, it is not an object belonging to the order of the good. Instead, it is an object belonging to the order of the beautiful, insofar it is pleasant to the sight, and so it represents a distance that cannot be closed by the satisfaction of desire.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, it represents the distance between the creator and the creature, which is the distance of God's gift of creation. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is given so that, at the centre of our anthropology, this distance may be maintained, so that the world does not simply become the theatre of our own egotistic projects and pursuits, but remains something that comes from outside of ourselves as a divine gift. When this distance is closed, when the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is eaten, when the beautiful is no longer a distinct dimension of Eden, death ensues. Do we not see this in modern consumerist economies, and the ecological crisis they are creating? The beautiful is essential because it is that relation where we learn to let things *be*.<sup>99</sup> It is the relation wherein we see created things in the light of their ultimate relation to God, as simply given, and not simply as related to ourselves. This is what is meant by the *symphony of being*, namely, the distance that lets things be in their 'harmonic otherness', which is the condition for our delighting in them *as other*, and I will argue that it is an order of being that is found between the true and the good, at the *heart* of being, just as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was placed in the middle of the Garden of Eden.

Keeping with this theme, G.K. Chesterton wrote that we all have a natural love for fairy tales, because they touch the nerve of our 'ancient instinct of astonishment', and are derived from the 'elementary wonder' of a child; and so:

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<sup>98</sup> David Bentley Hart characterises beauty as 'the distinction of the different, the otherness of the other, the true form of distance', which corresponds to the life of the Trinity, in which God is immanently and infinitely determined toward another, an infinite distance that is the distance of divine love and peace, which is repeated at an analogical interval in the giving of being to beings. See, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 177-78.

<sup>99</sup> In this respect, Our Lady (the 'Second Eve') is *mater metaphysicae* in her Magnificat: 'Let it be unto me according to thy word.' (Luke i. 38).

These tales say that apples were golden only to refresh the forgotten moment when we found that they were green. They make rivers run with wine only to make us remember, for one wild moment, that they run with water.<sup>100</sup>

If the drama of salvation essentially turns upon the healing of the human will, its surrender to the divine will so that it might find its true freedom, then we must remember the *forgotten* and *wild* moment of discovering the beautiful. Human beings characteristically inhabit the world in a manner that is far too hasty. We are far too quick to rush in to close the distance between ourselves and the desired end that we think will satisfy us, all too often failing to notice the sheer delightfulness of the surrounding things of the world – that rivers actually run with water! – as we march on, blinkered, constructing and pursuing our own projects and agendas. However, we must remember that moment of childlike and elementary wonder simply that the world is there, as a thing to be pleased *with* for its own sake, regardless of how it can serve our own perceived needs. For, only when we have found a true love for the beautiful, only when we have created space for its arresting power, its ability to stop us in our tracks – only when we have learned to be happy with the simple fact that apples grow out of the ends of branches on trees, without having to reach out to take them for ourselves – will we remember ourselves, and be able to move out towards the world truthfully, and discover the good that God might have in store for us.<sup>101</sup> In other words, without the transcendental order of the beautiful, we will never truly be at home in the world, nor with ourselves.

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<sup>100</sup> G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, in *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton*, Volume 1: Heretics, Orthodoxy, Blatchford Controversies, with Introduction and Notes by David Dooley, Editor (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986), 256-57.

<sup>101</sup> Chesterton (*ibid.*) continues, 'We have all forgotten what we really are. All that we call common sense and rationality and practicality and positivism only means that for certain dead levels of our life we forget that we have forgotten. All that we call spirit and art and ecstasy [*sic*] only means that for one awful instant we remember that we forget.'

## *Overview of the present study*

The present study will be divided into two parts:

In part one, our primary focus will be the systematic nature of Aquinas's understanding of the cumulative order of the transcendentals, and the implicit place of the beautiful within that order. In chapter one, we will delineate the six generic hallmarks of the transcendentals in Aquinas's thought, in order to outline the criteria that the beautiful must fulfil if it is to be granted a distinct transcendental status. In chapter two, we will compare Aquinas's various derivations of specific transcendental predicates and examine the apparent tensions between these accounts. In particular, we will raise the fundamentally important question concerning whether there is a tension between these accounts in terms of the systematic and cumulative order in which the transcendentals are comprised. In chapter three, we will introduce the framework of the *one* and the *many* in order to clarify the order of the first three transcendentals, namely, 'thing' (*res*), 'one' (*unum*), and 'something' (*aliquid*). In chapter four, I will demonstrate that our findings in chapter three can be harmonised within the further framework of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*, a motif of central importance for the present study. Furthermore, I will illustrate how this triad is used by Aquinas to explain the *ratio* of the true, the beautiful, and the good, and the way in which they are constituted by cumulative addition to one another, in order to illuminate the implicit place of the beautiful within the systematic order of the transcendentals.

In part two, our primary focus will be to confirm the initial proposals reached in part one, by closely examining Aquinas's various discussions of the beautiful, and setting those in the context of his wider thought. In chapter five, we will argue that the beautiful is reducible to neither the true nor the good as a species within a genus, as some have argued. Instead, we will see that the beautiful is fully distinguished from these two relational transcendentals, and that recognition of this fact is essential to make sense of Aquinas's wider anthropology of the soul. We will illustrate this latter

point particularly with reference to the idea of the 'honourable', and the giving of honour to the intrinsic excellence of others, which Aquinas connects with the notion of spiritual beauty. In chapter six, I will demonstrate that Aquinas's definition of the *ratio* of beauty in terms of the Dionysian dual formulation of 'brightness' (*claritas*) and 'harmony' (*consonantia*) harmonises with our proposal in part one, that the beautiful is also constituted by the Augustinian notes of *species*, which refers to the form of a being, and *mode*, which refers to the harmonic commensuration of that being's existence and essence, and substance and accidents. This will further confirm the distinction of the beautiful from the true and the good, and also its place within the cumulative order, whereby it 'adds' directly to the true, and is presupposed by the good. In chapter seven, I will argue that, whereas the beautiful is located in the intrinsic unity and harmony of a being, what it ultimately adds is a *relation* of the soul to that aspect in every being, namely, the relation of love. I will argue that Aquinas's characterisation of love perfectly corresponds to his conception of beauty, as the relation of the soul which repeats the gesture of creation, that is, as the simple delight in the harmonic otherness of others *as other*.

Finally, I will conclude by suggesting two ways in which we can see the *theological* significance of this study, and propose that beauty is an essential aspect of *nature* that is perfected by *grace* in the economy of salvation.

## PART ONE

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE GENERIC NATURE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALS

Before we address the specific question of the transcendental status of the beautiful, we must examine Aquinas's understanding of the transcendentals in general. Now, Aquinas did not write a separate treatise devoted to a systematic discussion of the transcendentals.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, there are certain key texts where he lists these 'general' modes of being, and outlines his understanding of the wider framework within which such lists ought to be situated.<sup>2</sup> We begin our study by turning to *De veritate* 1.1, the *locus classicus* in relation to such lists, which we will analyse by making connections with Aquinas's wider thought. Our analysis will unfold in three stages. First, I will examine the way in which Aquinas grounds the transcendentals upon the resolution into the first conception of the human intellect, namely, 'being'. Secondly, I will analyse his answer to the crucial question concerning how the transcendentals 'add' to being. Thirdly, and finally, I will attempt a comprehensive overview of Aquinas's understanding of the generic nature of the transcendentals, by identifying the six hallmarks attributed to them in his different writings. In the next chapter, we will then be in a position to consider his various derivations of a list of specific transcendentals, and to signpost several tensions identified by scholars in his accounts of those lists. This, in turn, will foreground the particularly important issue of the systematic order of the transcendentals, one of two aspects in Aertsen's 'guideline' in relation to

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<sup>1</sup> The first systematic works on this subject appeared in the sixteenth century. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 71-2.

<sup>2</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 21, a. 1; *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3. According to Aertsen, these three texts have a 'general character' and present Aquinas's doctrine of the transcendentals in its 'entirety'. *The Transcendentals*, 72. Two other important but less extensive texts are *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3 and *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6.

determining the transcendental status of the beautiful.<sup>3</sup> By the end of this chapter, we will have identified the essential generic hallmarks of all the transcendentals in Aquinas's thought, all six of which the beautiful must also possess if it is to be regarded as a distinct transcendental too.

*The resolution into the first conception of the intellect*

The opening article of *De veritate* addresses the question, 'What is truth?'<sup>4</sup> This question was discussed by Aquinas's predecessors, Philip the Chancellor, Alexander of Hales, and Albert the Great, all of whom collated various definitions from the tradition, from which they attempted to deduce the proper *ratio* of truth. However, Aquinas takes a different approach by conducting a formal investigation into the very conditions for inquiry into what something is.<sup>5</sup> He begins his response by stating that when one investigates the *quid est* of any one thing, just as in the case of providing a demonstration of a proposition, it is necessary to make a reduction to certain self-evident principles known to the intellect *per se*. Otherwise, the cognition of definitions, and the *scientia* based upon demonstration, become involved in an infinite regress, and the certainty of our knowledge in respect of these things entirely perishes.<sup>6</sup> Much

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<sup>3</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 337.

<sup>4</sup> 'The scholastic *quaestio* usually takes the form of a "whether" question... which can be either affirmed or denied. The question raised in *De veritate* 1.1, however, is a "what" question ("What is truth?"), but the problem that is actually discussed is the question whether the true is altogether identical with being.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 245. We see this especially from the fact that the objections to Aquinas's argument contend that it seems that the true and being are exactly the same, and the arguments *sed contra* contend that they are not. Aquinas argues in his replies that the true and being are identical in reality but differ conceptually.

<sup>5</sup> See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 73.

<sup>6</sup> According to Aquinas, a definition differs from a proposition because the former does not have the propositional structure of predicating one thing of something else, rather, it simply signifies what something is. Cf. *In Post. Anal.*, I, lect. 19 (165); II, lect. 2 (428).

remains implicit in this opening statement, but we can clarify what Aquinas has in mind by consulting the final article in his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*.<sup>7</sup>

In the speculative sciences, he explains, the demonstration of propositions and the finding of definitions proceeds from something 'previously known' (*prius noto*): a conclusion is demonstrated from previously known propositions, and a species is known from the prior conception of a genus and difference, and also the causes of a thing.<sup>8</sup> However, the demonstration or definition of one thing by means of something else previously known cannot go on to infinity, since the infinite cannot be traversed. Therefore, all inquiry in the speculative sciences must be reduced to something first (*prima*), which is neither learned nor discovered by means of something else, but is known naturally (*naturaliter*). In other words, the knowledge we have in the discoveries of reason (*ratio*) is rooted in a form of understanding (*intellectus*) that is naturally implanted in the mind.<sup>9</sup> The indemonstrable principles or axioms, such as the impossibility of simultaneously affirming and denying the same thing in the same respect (i.e., the principle of contradiction), or that every whole is greater than its part – to which all demonstrations are reducible – and the first conceptions of the intellect (*primae conceptiones intellectus*), such as 'being', 'one', and the like – to which all definitions must be reduced – are precisely those things that the human intellect does not discover, but knows *naturaliter* and *per se*.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, as Aertsen explains, in *De veritate* 1.1, 'the doctrine of the transcendentals is prepared through a reduction to

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<sup>7</sup> In *Boeth. De trin.* q. 6, a. 4.

<sup>8</sup> In the *Posterior Analytics* (71a 1), Aristotle argued, that all intellectual teaching and learning proceeds from 'pre-existent knowledge'. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 75

<sup>9</sup> 'Not all human knowledge is demonstrative; it must be differentiated. Knowledge of a principle is of a different nature than knowledge of a conclusion, is a different *habitus* from that of knowledge based on demonstration; it is an *intellectus*.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 77 & 177. For example, in the *Metaphysics* (c. 3, 1005b 14), Aristotle calls the principle of contradiction, 'that which presupposes nothing'. It is the first moment of insight, the condition for all *scientia*. The premise of the opening statement in *De veritate* 1.1 is that what is true of demonstrations in the order of *scientia*, is also true of investigating the nature of anything in the order of *diffinitio*.

<sup>10</sup> In *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 1, Aquinas describes the *primae conceptiones intellectus* as, either the 'complex' axioms or principles of demonstration, or the 'incomplex' principles of definition, such as 'being', 'one', and so forth. He calls these the pre-existing *scientiarum semina*.

that which is the foundation of knowledge and science... Thomas's *resolutio* is a going back to that first which is presupposed in all knowledge.'<sup>11</sup>

Ultimately, for Aquinas, that which the intellect first conceives as best known (*notissimum*), and into which it resolves all of its conceptions, is being (*ens*).<sup>12</sup> No argument is offered for the primacy of being in *De veritate* 1.1. However, it is a position that is repeatedly explained throughout Aquinas's work. For instance, in an important text in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, he argues that since nature is always directed to one thing, there must be one natural object for any particular power, as colour is the natural object of sight, and sound of hearing.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, since the intellect is one power it has one natural object, of which it has *per se* and natural knowledge, and under which it comprehends all things, and this is nothing other than being (*ens*). Therefore, the human intellect naturally knows being, and those things that belong *per se* to a being as such, and upon this knowledge is founded the knowledge of first principles, such as the impossibility of simultaneously affirming and negating (i.e., the principle of contradiction), for instance. These first principles are also known *naturaliter*, whereas conclusions are known through them.

Now, it might seem that Aquinas contradicts his own position that the intellect has only one natural object of which it has *per se* natural knowledge, namely, being. First of all, he argues that in the order of definitions, the intellect naturally knows the simple and 'incomplex' notions of not only being, but also of the 'one' and other

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<sup>11</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 79.

<sup>12</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3; *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15. Aertsen notes that, in positing being as the first conception of the intellect, Aquinas has self-consciously gone a step further than Aristotle, who terminated the ascent to the most general predicates in the *genera generalissima*, that is, the categories of being. Instead, Aquinas cites Avicenna as an authority. See *Metaphysica* I, 6 (72rb); I, 4 (71vb); I, 6 (73ra). Avicenna held that there were three primary notions, namely, 'thing', 'being', and 'necessary' (in later texts the latter was changed to 'one'), whereas Aquinas, who sometimes refers to a plurality of first conceptions, ultimately posits being as the *maxime primum*. We will return to this point in a moment. Similarly, whereas Avicenna held that the primary notions were 'impressed' by the universal Active Intellect, Aquinas uses the term 'conception', in order to refer to the intrinsic operation of the human intellect in attaining to these notions. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 81-83.

<sup>13</sup> *ScG* II, 83 (31).

similar notions, which are the first *conceptions* of the intellect.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, he also argues that upon the foundation of these ‘incomplex’ notions, the intellect also has a natural knowledge in the order of propositions of the ‘complex’ first principles or axioms of demonstration.<sup>15</sup> In other words, it appears that the human intellect has more than one natural object that it knows *naturaliter*.

However, this *apparent* contradiction can be clarified by turning to a very important passage in relation to Aquinas’s understanding of the transcendentals, which can be found in question 1, article 3, in the eighth distinction of his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. He explains, among the first conceptions of the intellect, such as ‘being’, ‘one’, ‘true’, and ‘good’,

simply and absolutely, being is prior to the others. The reason for this is that being is included in the understanding of the others, but not conversely. For, the first thing that falls into the imagination [*imaginatio*] of the intellect is being, without which nothing can be apprehended by the intellect. Just as the first thing that falls into the assent [*credulitate*] of the intellect are the first axioms, and especially this one: ‘contradictories are not simultaneously true.’ Thus all the others are somehow included in being, in a united and indistinct way, as in their principle.<sup>16</sup>

The notion of being is included in that of the one, the true, and the good, because it is absolutely and simply the first conception of the intellect, without which nothing else can be apprehended.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, these other conceptions of the intellect are not necessary for our apprehension of the notion of being. Nevertheless, because being is

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<sup>14</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 1; *In Boeth. De trin.* q. 6, a. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *ScG II*, 83 (31).

<sup>16</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3. My modification of Aertsen’s translation, *The Transcendentals*, 83. Aertsen (*ibid.*, 84) points out that the influence of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* is manifest in this text, especially in the parallelism between the order of demonstration and that of the concept, and the signification of these two orders, respectively, by the terms *credulitas* and *imaginatio*, which are borrowed from the *Avicenna latinus*. However, Aquinas’s innovation is the absolute primacy of being, a notion that is included in everything that the human intellect apprehends.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Being is so familiar to us that it usually remains hidden to us that human knowledge is principally a conception of being. Only in reflexive analysis, in the *resolutio*, does it become clear that “without being nothing can be apprehended by the intellect.”’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 84. Being has this priority in the order of resolution, that is, as the conception that is included in all other conceptions of the intellect, which does not need to be explained by any other concept. However, this does not mean that it is the first conception of the intellect in the temporal order, i.e., it is not necessarily the first thing that we are *aware* of knowing.

an original fullness, it contains all of the other first conceptions of the intellect in a united and indistinct way, as effects are pre-contained in their principle. In this way, we might say that these other first conceptions of the intellect belong *per se* to being because it is their principle. As such, there is not, of necessity, a contradiction in Aquinas's position, on the one hand, that the intellect has one natural object, namely, being, and, on the other hand, that there is a plurality of first conceptions which are also known naturally, for the latter are contained in the former as in their principle. Of course, this raises the question of how it is possible for these conceptions to unfold from the primal fullness of being in such a way that they are conceptually distinct, whilst also being contained within the one reality that the intellect knows naturally. This issue concerns the question of the 'addition' to being, which we will explore at length in the next section of this chapter. Upon the basis of this discussion, it will become clear by the end of this chapter that Aquinas's position simply reflects the unique nature of being and its explication in its transcendental modes.

Similarly, there is no problem with his statement that upon the basis of its natural knowledge of the first conceptions of simple and 'incomplex' notions, such as 'being', the 'one', and so forth, the human intellect also has natural knowledge of certain first principles of demonstration, namely, the 'complex' axioms.<sup>18</sup> As Aertsen argues, under the influence of Aristotle's distinction between the two operations of the intellect, namely, the first operation of 'apprehension' (i.e., grasping the quiddity of something), and the second operation of 'judgement' (i.e., composing and dividing in the forming of propositions), Aquinas argues that the first conception in the order of definition, which belongs to 'apprehension', is the foundation of the first principles in the order of demonstration, which belong to 'judgement'.<sup>19</sup> As he explains in the *Summa theologiae*, there is a certain order found in those things that fall into the apprehension of all things:

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<sup>18</sup> ScG II, 83 (31).

<sup>19</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 150-51.

For that which, before aught else, falls under apprehension, is *being*, the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends. Wherefore the first indemonstrable principle is that *the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time*, which is based on the notion of *being* and *not-being*: and on this principle all others are based...<sup>20</sup>

Accordingly, the human intellect has a natural knowledge of the principle of contradiction, in terms of its second operation of ‘judgement’, because this principle is founded purely upon the natural knowledge of ‘being’ and its negation, namely, ‘non-being’, which pertains to its first operation of ‘apprehension’. In other words, the only positive content in this *complex* is the natural knowledge of being. As the negation of being, ‘non-being’ is not another thing that the intellect knows.<sup>21</sup> As such, the natural knowledge of the principle of contradiction, for instance, does not represent another object that the human intellect naturally knows alongside being. Rather, it is simply an immediate logical unfolding, in the order of demonstration, of the intellect’s natural knowledge of being in the order of definition.

Before we turn to the specific question of the ‘addition’ to being, one further clarification is needed. Aquinas builds his general account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 1.1 upon being insofar as it is the first conception of the human intellect.<sup>22</sup> However, this foundation is not a kind of Kantian transcendentalism based purely upon the structure of human cognition.<sup>23</sup> As Aertsen notes, Aquinas’s position that being is that which is first known is ‘a fundamental statement on the relation between man and *reality*.’<sup>24</sup> As Aquinas repeatedly explains, human knowledge of first principles and conceptions is not absolutely prior in reality, but is dependent upon an encounter with sensible beings. For instance, he argues in the *Summa contra Gentiles*,

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<sup>20</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Likewise, the principle that a part is not bigger than the whole is similarly reducible to the ‘incomplex’ notion of ‘one’ and that which it negates, namely, ‘division’, for the divided part is necessarily less than the whole within which it is united.

<sup>22</sup> This is also true of his other major derivations of the transcendentals. See: *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3; *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6.

<sup>23</sup> ‘The knowledge of being is not an *a priori* condition of the intellect, is not a formal category in the Kantian sense, which constitutes the object.’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 182.

<sup>24</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 80. My emphasis.

'our knowledge of principles themselves is derived from sensible things; if, for instance, we had not perceived some whole by our senses, we would be unable to understand the principle that the whole is greater than its parts.'<sup>25</sup> Likewise, in his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*, he reasons:

the only things we can know in the speculative sciences, either through demonstration or definition, are those that lie within the range of these naturally known principles. Now these principles are revealed to man by the light of the agent intellect, which is something natural to him; and this light makes things known to us only to the extent that it renders images actually intelligible; for in this consists the operation of the agent intellect, as the *De Anima* says. Now images are taken from the senses. So our knowledge of the above-mentioned principles begins in the senses and memory.<sup>26</sup>

As such, our natural knowledge of 'being' is occasioned or actuated by sensible things.<sup>27</sup> The human intellect might be directed towards being *naturaliter*, but it is naturally in a state of potentiality towards its proper object, for it is proper to the divine intellect alone to be naturally in a state of actuality towards its proper object.<sup>28</sup> Paradoxically, we might even say that the mind's encounter with particular beings both gives rise to, and is simultaneously enabled by, a moment of *recognition* of being and its primal fullness. Thus, the fundamental reason for being's priority in human cognition is not dialectical, but rests upon an ontological basis: 'the first thing conceived by the intellect is being; because everything is knowable only inasmuch as it is in actuality. Hence, being is the proper object of the intellect, and is primarily

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<sup>25</sup> ScG II, 83 (32).

<sup>26</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.* q. 6, a. 4. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 1. 'The notion of "being" is immediately conceived at the moment when the human intellect begins to act, for the intellect is directed by nature to "being." But being is always known through species abstracted from sensible things, for the act proper to the agent intellect is to abstract the intelligible from the sensible. The two moments cannot be separated, but they must be distinguished.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 183.

<sup>27</sup> Thus, there is a 'relative pre-existence' to the knowledge of the intellect's first conceptions, that is, as an *intellectus* that precedes the discursive nature of the knowledge we acquire in scientific inquiry, but not as *a priori* knowledge that is *introduced by the intellect into the object of sense experience*. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 178. Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 1; *In II Post. Anal.*, lect. 20.

<sup>28</sup> *STh* I, q. 14, a. 2; cf. *STh* I, q. 79, a. 2. Likewise, Aquinas is insistent that what is first known to the human intellect is not that which is first *simpliciter*, i.e., divine being, but that which is first for the human intellect, i.e., *ens commune*, the proper subject of metaphysics. See *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 1, a. 3; *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 11 ad 10. Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 161-165.

intelligible'.<sup>29</sup> In other words, that something actually has being is the necessary condition and basis upon which it is knowable.<sup>30</sup>

### *The question of 'addition' to being*

From the premise that being is the first conception of the intellect, Aquinas draws the conclusion that the intellect arrives at all of its other conceptions from 'addition to being' (*ex additione ad ens*).<sup>31</sup> However, he immediately qualifies this by stating that it is not possible for there to be something that is extraneous to being, which might be added to it in the way that a difference is to a genus, or an accident to a subject, because every nature is essentially a being, and Aristotle has shown that being is not a genus. Essentially, this represents the Parmenidean problem of how being can be differentiated when there is nothing outside of being that might differentiate it extrinsically.<sup>32</sup> To put the matter simply, being cannot be the genus of something because every genus has differences that are outside the essence of the genus, but no difference could be found that would be outside the essence of being, for everything that *is*, is a being, and non-being cannot be a difference.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, Aquinas's solution in *De veritate* 1.1 is that some predicates can be said to add to being inasmuch as they

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<sup>29</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 2. Cf. 'The priority of being has an ontological basis, since it is founded on its actuality... Being is the *primum intelligibile*, that is, the formal aspect on the basis of which things are accessible to the intellect.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 170 & 180.

<sup>30</sup> Thus, because God is self-subsisting being itself (*ipsum esse per se subsistens*), he is pre-eminently knowable in himself. See *STh* I, q. 12, a. 1; q. 14, a. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. 'After having followed the way of analysis, the *resolutio*, he now takes the opposite direction, that of "synthesis."' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 84.

<sup>32</sup> Aquinas rejects Parmenides's answer to the problem, based upon Aristotle's argument that being cannot be a genus. See *In I Metaph.*, lect. 9 (138-39); *In III Metaph.*, lect. 8 (433). Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 3, 998b (17-28); Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 85-6.

<sup>33</sup> See *STh* I, q. 3, a. 5.

express a 'mode' of being itself (*modum ipsius entis*) that is not explicitly expressed by the predicate 'being' (*ens*), and this can happen in one of two ways.<sup>34</sup>

The first way is the expression of a certain *special* mode of being, which refers to the diverse 'grades' of entity according to which we speak of diverse 'modes of existing', and by which we classify things into diverse genera, namely, Aristotle's ten *categories* or *genera*.<sup>35</sup> Aquinas only mentions the first of these, namely, 'substance', a term that does not signify the addition of any difference or nature over and above being, but simply expresses a special 'mode of existing', namely a 'being in itself' (*per se ens*). The expression of a *special* mode of being is what the other genera 'add' to being, that is, the categories of 'accidental' being, which only have being in another (*in alio*).<sup>36</sup> The second way is the expression of a *general* mode of being, which, in contrast to the *special* or *categorial* division of being into different kinds or modes of being, is 'consequent upon every being'.<sup>37</sup> In other words, the general or transcendental modes of being express the inner determinations of being simply because it is being, which means that they are found wherever being is found.<sup>38</sup> Having stated this position, Aquinas proceeds to elucidate it by deriving specific transcendental predicates, which we will examine in more detail in the next chapter. Before we do so, however, we must clarify this distinction between *special* and *general*

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<sup>34</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. 'A further determination of being is only possible as an expression or explication of what is contained in being in an implicit and indefinite way... The determination of being does not occur through external differentiations but through its inner modes. The addition to being is a *modal* explication.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 88. As we will see, there is a systematic force to Aquinas's statement that there are *two ways* in which certain predicates can be said to 'add' to being, by expressing something not explicitly expressed by the term being itself, for this division is based upon whether they express, on the one hand, something founded upon a thing existing in the *reality* of nature, or, on the other hand, something merely *rational* or *conceptual*.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> For Aquinas's discussion of the ten categories or 'predicaments', see *In V Metaph.*, lect. 5 (1763); lect. 9 (889-90); lect. 22 (1126); *In III Phys.*, lect. 5 (322). Cf. J.F. Wippel, 'Thomas Aquinas's Derivation of the Aristotelian Categories (Predicaments),' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987), 13-34.

<sup>37</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. 'Thomas has arrived at the goal at which the entire preceding exposition aimed, namely the doctrine of the transcendentals.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 91.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 3: 'verum addit supra ens, sicut et bonum et unum. Nullum tamen eorum addit aliquam differentiam contrahentem ens, sed *rationem quae consequitur omne ens*'.

modes of being by turning to *De veritate* 21.1, where Aquinas provides a more extensive comparison between these two different kinds of addition to being.

The question under consideration in this context is whether the good ‘adds’ to being, and Aquinas begins his response by observing that one thing can add to another in one of three ways. First, one can add something that is outside the essence of the thing to which it is said to be added, just as white adds something to a body, because the essence of whiteness is outside the essence of corporeality. However, it is not possible for one to add something to ‘being in general’ (*ens universale*) in this way, for no natural thing is extraneous to its essence, although there can be an addition to some sort of particular being (*ens particulare*) in this way, because there are things that are extraneous to the essence of *this* being, since the ‘whole power of being’ belongs to no natural thing, but to the divine essence alone.<sup>39</sup>

Secondly, one thing can be added to another as that which ‘contracts’ and ‘determines’ it. For instance, in this way ‘humanity’ adds something to ‘animality’, not because there is some reality in the former that is completely outside the essence of the latter – for the whole of a human being is animal, and not just a part – but because what is determinately and actually contained in the *ratio* of ‘humanity’ is implicitly and potentially contained in the *ratio* of ‘animality’. For, just as the idea of human nature is that which possesses a rational soul, the idea of animal nature is that which has a soul without it being determined to either rational or non-rational. Yet, the determination by reason of which ‘humanity’ is said to add something to ‘animality’, by contracting and determining it, is founded on something in reality.<sup>40</sup> In other words, ‘humanity’ is not merely a conceptual addition to ‘animality’, but an addition that is founded upon something real, namely, human nature. It is in this way that each of the ten genera or categories add something to being (*ens*), not by adding an accident or difference which is outside the essence of being, but by limiting and contracting it

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<sup>39</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1. Cf. *ScG* I, 28.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. *STh* I, q. 5, a. 3 ad 1: ‘substantia, quantitas et qualitas, et ea quae sub eis continentur, contrahunt ens applicando ens ad aliquam quidditatem seu naturam.’

to a determinate (or *special*) 'mode of being', which is founded upon the very essence of the thing.<sup>41</sup> In other words, by having the essential nature of one of the ten categories, a particular being cannot be in one of the other categories. For instance, the colour red is not the number three, and even though the colour white can exist in the substance of human nature, humanity is not necessarily white, and all that is white is not humanity. All of these things are contained in the *ratio* of *ens universale*, which the categories contract to a finite and determinate kind of being, which is mutually exclusive of other such determinations. However, Aquinas states that the 'good' – and the other transcendentals by extension – does not add something to being in this way, because, like being, it is divided by the ten genera, and is found equally in each of them.<sup>42</sup>

Thirdly, and finally, one thing can add to another something purely conceptual or rational, that is, when something is in the *ratio* of the one and not in that of the other, which is an addition of something that is nothing real in nature, but only a being of reason. Furthermore, this conceptual addition does not necessarily contract that to which it is added. For example, the predicate 'blind' adds something above 'humanity', namely blindness, which is not a being in nature, but is only a being of reason in the one comprehending the nature of a privation; and by this humanity is contracted, for not every person is blind, whereas when we say a 'blind mole', for instance, no contraction is made by this addition, for no mole has the cognitive power of sight.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, Aquinas draws the conclusion that the 'good' must either add nothing to being, or something in concept only, for if it added something real it would

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Cf. 'Thomas's first modal explication of being incorporates a central doctrine of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Although being is no genus, it can be divided into the genera of substance and accidents, which order the multiplicity of the real. Yet Thomas sets the doctrine of the categories in a specific framework that is not found in the Philosopher. The categories express *special* modes of being, the most general genera *contract* being. These insights prepare the next step in the modal explication of being.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 90.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.: 'bonum dividatur aequaliter in decem genera, ut ens'. Cf. 'While the (Aristotelian) categories are "finite," the more fundamental transcendental determinations of being are so to speak infinite.' Schindler, *The Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 351.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

be necessary that the logical character of the good would contract being to some special genus. In other words, if good added to being by contracting and determining it, then goodness would lose its co-extension with being.<sup>44</sup> However, he argues, being is the first conception to fall into the intellect, and so every other name must either be a synonym of being – which cannot be said of ‘good’, for instance, since it is not nugatory or meaningless to call a being ‘good’ – or add something at least *secundum rationem*. Therefore, because the good does not contract being, it must add to it something conceptual only.<sup>45</sup> In other words, the categories add something real to being, not, that is, something that is extrinsic to being, but a determination or contraction of being to something finite, so that each is *really* distinct from the other, whereas the transcendentals only add something conceptually to being, and so they are co-extensive with being and one another, and run through all the categories. Aquinas concludes this point by explaining that what is merely *rational* or *conceptual* can be one of two kinds, either a negation or a relation, since every ‘absolute positing’ signifies something *real* existing in nature.<sup>46</sup> It is upon this foundation that he makes his derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 21.1, which we will examine in the next chapter.

In neither of the two texts in *De veritate* that we have just analysed does Aquinas use the term ‘transcendental’ to refer to the general modes of being that add to being in concept only. Indeed, throughout his different writings he uses a variety of locutions depending upon the context. For instance, when the *resolutio* of knowledge

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<sup>44</sup> ‘Because transcendentals do not contract being but are coextensive with it, the problem of the addition to being becomes particularly acute at this level. This problem is the cardinal question in Thomas’s doctrine of transcendentals.’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 93

<sup>45</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1: ‘bonum, ex quo non contrahit ens, addat aliquid super ens, quod sit rationis tantum.’ Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3: ‘Alia vero quae diximus, scilicet bonum, verum et unum, addunt super ens, non quidem naturam aliquam, sed rationem’; *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 3: ‘verum addit supra ens, sicut et bonum et unum. Nullum tamen eorum addit aliquam differentiam contrahentem ens, sed rationem quae consequitur omne ens’; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7, ad 6: ‘Oportet autem quod alia tria super ens addant aliquid quod ens non contrahat; si enim contraherent ens, iam non essent prima. Hoc autem esse non potest nisi addant aliquid secundum rationem tantum’.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Id autem quod est rationis tantum, non potest esse nisi duplex, scilicet negatio et aliqua relatio. Omnis enim positio absoluta aliquid in rerum natura existens significat.’

is in the foreground of his discussions he prefers to use the term *prima*, or first conceptions of the intellect, and when the 'extension' of this general mode of being is in the foreground he uses the term *maxime communia*.<sup>47</sup> As Aertsen notes, Aquinas often uses the terms *transcendere* and *transcendens* in the Augustinian sense of 'surpass', as in the way that God, or the spiritual in general, surpasses the nature of corporeality. Yet, developments in medieval thought led to the idea that transcendental, technically speaking, expresses the surpassing of the ten categories by certain predicates which are not restricted to one of the categories, but 'run through' all of them.<sup>48</sup> This is evident in Aquinas's opposition of 'special' (i.e., *categorial*) and 'general' (i.e., *transcendental*) modes of being, the one adding something to being that is founded on something in *reality*, the other adding something that is only *rational* or *conceptual*.

Thus far, we have seen that this comparison brings out the fact that the transcendentals are 'co-extensive' with being, insofar as they are divided by the ten categories and found in each of them, and do not contract or determine being to a special category or genus. In other words, the general or transcendental modes of being are consequent upon every being. This generic hallmark of the transcendentals is particularly in the foreground of Aquinas's discussions in *De veritate* 1.1 and 21.1. Yet, the co-extension with being in *transcending* the categories is not the only hallmark of these general modes of being. We can situate this feature within a much more comprehensive framework by returning to question 1, article 3, in the eighth

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<sup>47</sup> See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 91. A helpful list of the instances when Aquinas does use the term *transcendentia* in the technical sense it acquired in the thirteenth century is provided by Aertsen (*Ibid.*, n. 52).

<sup>48</sup> For example, *De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 2 ad 8: 'in transcendentibus, quae circumeunt omne ens'; *In X Metaph.*, lect. 3 (1975): 'Unum consequitur omnia alia praedicamenta et non est in aliquo uno praedicamento tantum'; *In II Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 obj. 2: 'bonum transcendit genus qualitatis'. As Aertsen notes, 'The transcendentals transcend the categories not in the sense that they signify a separate reality "beyond" the categories. The origin of the term *transcendens* is not the Platonic-Augustinian ascent to God. Transcendentals surpass the categories because they run through all of them. They are not restricted to one of the categories but are common to them.' *The Transcendentals*, 93. Cf. Kovach, *Die Ästhetik*, 183-85.

distinction of Aquinas's commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, a text we encountered in the previous section of this chapter, which Aertsen regards as Aquinas's 'most complete analysis of the relations between the transcendentals.'<sup>49</sup>

### *The six generic hallmarks of the transcendentals*

In this key text, Aquinas addresses the question concerning whether the name 'he who is' (*qui est*), that is, 'being', is first among the divine names.<sup>50</sup> He argues that the names 'being' and 'good', 'one' and 'true', precede the other divine names *simpliciter* according to our mode of understanding (*secundum rationem intelligendi*), because of their commonality (*communitate*).<sup>51</sup> In the first *sed contra*, Dionysius is cited as an authority, who argues that the divine attributes are not made known to us except from their participations, whereby they are participated in by creatures.<sup>52</sup> In other words, according to the order of our understanding, the transcendentals or *communia*, namely, being, good, one, and true, precede all others, because they are most common in creatures, and so it is particularly appropriate to attribute them as divine names to God, the cause of all, according to the 'way of causality' (*via causalitatis*).<sup>53</sup> However, Aquinas also states that these names can be compared with one another in two ways: *secundum suppositum* and *secundum intentiones*.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 95.

<sup>50</sup> As we noted in the introduction, the transcendental modes of being can be analogously predicated of God, for he is self-subsisting being itself, whose proper effect is created being. Cf. *STh* I, q. 13, a. 11.

<sup>51</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 11 ad 10; *STh* I, q. 93, a. 9: 'Unum autem, cum sit de transcendentibus, et commune est omnibus.'

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 12, a. 12. For the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius upon Aquinas's metaphysical thought see, Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992).

<sup>53</sup> As Schindler explains, the three transcendentals *one*, *true*, and *good*, were privileged in the Middle Ages because they were a triad of divine names that were approached explicitly as an analogical reflection of the Trinity, the three hypostases that are one in *being*. See *The Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 355.

<sup>54</sup> Aquinas makes it clear that, in this context, *intentio* has the same meaning as *ratio*. For example, *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3 ad 5: 'Cum autem comparamus intentionem boni et veri, intentio sumitur

On the one hand, considered *secundum suppositum*, that is, according to the natural reality or subject in which they are found, the transcendentals are (1) ‘convertible’, (2) ‘identical’, and (3) they never desert one another, that is, they are ‘coextensive’.<sup>55</sup> These same three characteristics are identified by Aquinas a little later in his commentary on the *Sentences*.<sup>56</sup> He argues, the true, the good, and the one ‘add’ something to being, not any difference that contracts being, but something *rational* that is consequent upon every being, and so they are convertible with one another and with being. In other words, in contrast to the categories which contract being, (1) the transcendentals add something only rational, which means that they are *identical* with being, and so (2) they are *co-extensive* with being, for they are consequent upon every being, and therefore, (3) they are *convertible* with one another. We will examine each of these characteristics in more detail, starting with the ‘identity’ of the transcendentals, then their ‘convertibility’, and finally their ‘co-extension’.

First, the transcendentals do not add something to being that is founded upon something *real* in nature, that would contract being as the categories do, instead, they only add something that is merely conceptual, and so they are ‘identical’ with being and one another in terms of the subject or reality in which they are found. In other words, these names (*nomen*) refer to the same thing (*res*), differing only according to the conception of the intellect (*ratio*).<sup>57</sup> That is, they are identical *materialiter* and only

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pro ratione quam significat definitio’. Likewise, in addition to the term *secundum suppositum*, Aquinas will also speak of the identity of the transcendentals *secundum rem* (e.g., *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1 ad s.c. 5; *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1), and *in subiecto* (e.g., *STh* II-II, q. 109, a. 2 ad 1). This twofold relation among the transcendentals was first formulated by Philip the Chancellor. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 25-39. Cf. *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 2 (548).

<sup>55</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3: ‘secundum suppositum; et sic convertuntur ad invicem, et sunt idem in supposito, nec unquam derelinquunt se.’ For the idea of the ‘co-extension’ of the transcendentals, see, for example, *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1 ad s.c. 2: ‘nec verum excedit nec exceditur ab ente.’

<sup>56</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 3: ‘verum addit supra ens, sicut et bonum et unum. Nullum tamen eorum addit aliquam differentiam contrahentem ens, sed rationem quae consequitur omne ens; sicut unum addit rationem indivisionis, et bonum rationem finis, et verum rationem ordinis ad cognitionem; et ideo haec quatuor convertuntur, ens, bonum, unum et verum.’

<sup>57</sup> See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 95-97. Cf. *STh* I, q. 13, a. 4: ‘Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen.’

different *formaliter*.<sup>58</sup> For example, two different accidents may exist in the same subject, as in the case of a person who has brown hair and green eyes, but these accidents refer to different things – that is, they are materially and formally distinct in the same subject – such that they are divided in a way that does not apply to the truth and goodness of a being. By contrast, truth and goodness apply equally to the person, their hair, their eyes, and everything else predicable of them. Truth and goodness may signify different conceptions, but they do not refer to substantially distinct realities. As such, the ‘identity’ of the transcendentals is their fundamental characteristic insofar as they are considered *secundum suppositum* or *secundum rem*. We might say that the ‘identity’ of the transcendentals expresses their *substantive indivisibility*.

Secondly, because the transcendentals are ‘identical’ with one another and with being, they are ‘convertible’ with one another.<sup>59</sup> Now, two terms are convertible when they can be affirmed of each other, that is, when they can be predicated ‘conversely’, or in either direction.<sup>60</sup> For example, Aquinas will often say that the true and the good are convertible with one another in subject or supposit because every true is good, and every good is true.<sup>61</sup> In other words, truth is a kind of goodness, and goodness is a kind of truth.<sup>62</sup> By contrast, in terms of the ‘special’ categories of being, we cannot say, for instance, that every blue thing is red, and that every red thing is blue, or that every tree is a dog, and that every dog is a tree, because the categorial modes of being are mutually exclusive. This mark of ‘convertibility’ is a direct consequence of the previous mark of ‘identity’: because the true and the good refer to the same thing, that thing is true and good, which means that, that which is true is good, and that which

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. *STh* III, q. 16, a. 7 ad 4: ‘terminus in subiecto positus tenetur materialiter, idest pro supposito, positus vero in praedicato, tenetur formaliter, idest pro natura significata.’ *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 10 ad 1: ‘ubi est diversa ratio obiecti, ibi invenimus diversam potentiam, quamvis sit eadem res quae subest utrique rationi, sicut est de bono et vero.’

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>60</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 2 obj. 2: ‘converti enim est conversim praedicari.’

<sup>61</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 109, a. 2 ad 1: ‘verum et bonum subiecto quidem convertuntur, quia omne verum est bonum, et omne bonum est verum.’

<sup>62</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4 ad 1.

is good is true. In this respect, we might say that the ‘convertibility’ of the transcendentals expresses their *qualitative reciprocity*.

Thirdly, and finally, the transcendentals never desert one another, that is, where one is found the others are necessarily found too, and so they are ‘coextensive’ with being and with one another. The transcendentals are the *maxime communia*,<sup>63</sup> they are common to all things, and so being neither exceeds, nor is exceeded by its transcendental modes, that is, they have the same extension or scope.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the ten genera, which exclude one another, the transcendentals necessarily include one another in the sense that they extend to the same number of genera, that is, they equally run through all categories. As we saw above, the technical sense acquired in the thirteenth-century by the term ‘transcendental’ precisely expresses this idea of a predicate that *transcends* the Aristotelian categories in this way. Because the transcendentals do not add something that contracts being, that is, because they are identical with it (i.e., they only differ conceptually), therefore, they are ‘general’ modes of being, that are consequent upon every being *qua* being. In other words, this mark of ‘co-extension’ is a direct consequence of the mark of ‘identity’: because the good, for instance, refers to the same thing as being, the good is found wherever being is found. In this respect, we might say that the ‘co-extension’ of the transcendentals expresses their *quantitative ubiquity*.

On the other hand, and by contrast, the transcendentals can be compared *secundum intentiones*, that is, according as their formal or conceptual signification is distinct in the order of our understanding.

As we saw in the first section of this chapter, in this respect, (1) simply and absolutely, being has conceptual ‘priority’ in relation to the other transcendentals, that is, it is included in their understanding, but not vice versa, because being is the first thing that falls into the intellect, without which the mind cannot apprehend anything.

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<sup>63</sup> *In De hebdom.*, lect. 2. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 91.

<sup>64</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1, ad s.c. 2: ‘nec verum excedit nec exceditur ab ente.’

So, whilst the other transcendentals are included in being as in their principle, in a united and indistinct way, they are not included in our understanding of being, for it is first among the *prima* as that which is known self-evidently.<sup>65</sup> In this respect, we might say that this 'priority' expresses the *qualitatively non-reciprocal inclusion* of being in the understanding of the others, such as 'one', 'true', and 'good'.

Furthermore, (2) all the other transcendentals are additions to being, not because they add some nature existing in reality, but because they only add something 'conceptual'.<sup>66</sup> As such, this conceptual addition to being is the fundamental characteristic of the transcendentals insofar as they are considered *secundum intentiones*. It expresses the fact that the transcendentals only differ from being and one another because they add something rational or conceptual, and not something founded in the reality of nature. The first mark *secundum intentiones* that we just identified, namely, the non-reciprocal inclusion of being in the understanding of the other transcendentals, results directly from this second mark. In other words, there is a non-reciprocal inclusion of being in the understanding of the other transcendentals, because the former is presupposed by the latter as that to which they are understood as conceptual *additions*. Therefore, this second mark signifies the *conceptual divisibility* or *diversity* of the transcendentals.

Finally, (3) Aquinas states that one is 'closest' (*propinquissimum*) to being, because it only adds a negation, whereas true and good add relations to the end and the exemplar form, respectively.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the transcendentals evidently make an addition to being in a particular *order*, according to a certain conceptual proximity to the notion of being. Again, this is a consequence of the fact that the transcendentals only differ from being and one another conceptually, since a multitude of things that

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<sup>65</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3. 'Cujus ratio est, quia ens includitur in intellectu eorum, et non e converso... unde omnia alia includuntur quodammodo in ente unite et distincte, sicut in principio'. Incidentally, this is why Aquinas regards 'being', or 'He Who Is', as appropriately the most proper divine name. Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6: 'maxime primum est ens.'

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Alia vero quae diximus, scilicet bonum, verum et unum, addunt super ens, non quidem naturam aliquam, sed rationem'.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

are *formally* distinct always proceeds from a single principle in some order.<sup>68</sup> In this sense, we might describe the order by which they unfold the primal fullness of being as their *quantitative* or *numerical proximity* to being. Aquinas does not spell out the precise order of the transcendentals in this text, but we will return to this important aspect below.<sup>69</sup>

Now, the three aspects of the transcendentals *secundum intentiones* or *secundum rationem*, by which they are conceptually *many*, are the mirror opposites of the three aspects *secundum suppositum* or *secundum rem*, by which they are *one* in reality.<sup>70</sup> This opposition can be explicated by analogy with Aquinas's distinction between the notions of 'sameness', 'likeness', and 'equality', which follow upon the idea of the *one*, and their respective contraries, namely, 'diversity', 'unlikeness', and 'inequality', which follow upon the idea of the *many*.<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, two things are the 'same' (*idem*) if they are one in *substance*, or 'diverse' if they are not; 'like' (*simile*) if they are one in *quality*, or 'unlike' if they are not; 'equal' (*aequale*) if they are one in *quantity*, or 'unequal' if they are not. Furthermore, Aquinas argues that, since quality and quantity are rooted in substance, it follows that there is unity of quality and quantity wherever there is unity of substance.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, we can say that, by analogy, on the one hand, *secundum rem*, (1) the 'identity' of the transcendentals pertains to their 'sameness', which we characterised

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 36, a. 2: 'Nusquam enim hoc invenimus, quod ab uno procedant plura absque ordine, nisi in illis solum quae materialiter differunt; sicut unus faber producit multos cultellos materialiter ab invicem distinctos, nullum ordinem habentes ad invicem.'

<sup>69</sup> See *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3.

<sup>70</sup> This idea is proposed by Michael J. Rubin, 'The Meaning of "Beauty" and Its Transcendental Status in the Metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas', PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2016, 53-55 and 87 (Figure 1). Rubin argues that the three traits of the transcendentals according to reality, namely, 'identity', 'convertibility', and 'co-extension', are opposed, respectively, to the three traits according to meaning, namely, 'distinction', 'order', and 'addition to and inclusion of prior terms in their order'. I am indebted to Rubin for this idea of opposing the twofold division of the transcendentals. In what follows, I seek to formulate this opposition in a slightly different way, and to develop Rubin's analysis further.

<sup>71</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1999-2000). As we will see in the next two chapters, the framework of the *one* and the *many* is fundamental to Aquinas's understanding of the transcendentals and the systematic order by which they conceptually unfold being.

<sup>72</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (2007).

above as their *substantive indivisibility*, insofar as they are predicated of the same thing in reality. Likewise, (2) their ‘convertibility’ pertains to their ‘likeness’, which we characterised above as their *qualitative reciprocity*, insofar as they can be predicated in either direction of one another. Finally, (3) their ‘coextension’ pertains to their ‘equality’, which we characterised above as their *quantitative ubiquity*, insofar as they extend to the same number of genera.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, if we slightly re-arrange the order given above, *secundum rationem*, (1) the conceptual ‘addition’ made to being by the transcendentals means that there is a genuine *rational* ‘diversity’ or ‘non-identity’ among them, which is opposed to their *substantive* ‘identity’.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, (2) the ‘priority’ of being and its ‘non-reciprocal inclusion’ in the understanding of the others pertains to the ‘unlikeness’ of the transcendentals, insofar as the single direction of being’s conceptual priority is *qualitatively* opposed to the ‘likeness’ of the transcendentals *secundum rem*, whereby they are ‘convertible’ and can be predicated in either direction of one another.<sup>75</sup> Finally, (3) the addition made by the transcendentals ‘in order of proximity’ pertains to their ‘inequality’, insofar as their differing levels of conceptual proximity to being (or, to put it negatively, the extent of their conceptual remoteness or distance from being) is opposed to their *quantitative* ‘coextension’ with one another *secundum suppositum*. For instance, in an important text that we will examine in closer detail in the next chapter, Aquinas argues that some transcendentals presuppose others because they include *more* in their concept than that which they presuppose.<sup>76</sup> In other words, the transcendentals extend to the same

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<sup>73</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1: ‘bonum dividatur aequaliter in decem genera, ut ens...’

<sup>74</sup> For instance, *STh* I-II, q. 29, a. 5: ‘verum et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed differunt ratione...’; *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3: ‘pulchrum est idem bono, sola ratione differens.’ These examples clearly show that Aquinas counterposes the ‘identity’ of the transcendentals *secundum rem* to their difference or ‘diversity’ *secundum rationem*.

<sup>75</sup> On the one hand, Aquinas argues that two terms are convertible if they can be predicated of one another ‘conversely’ (e.g., *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 2 obj. 2: ‘converti enim est conversim praedicari’), but on the other hand, he argues that being is included in the understanding of the other transcendentals, but *not* ‘conversely’ (e.g., *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3: ‘ens includitur in intellectu eorum, et non e converso’).

<sup>76</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3: ‘Considerando ergo verum et bonum secundum se, sic verum est prius bono secundum rationem, cum verum sit perfectivum alicuius secundum rationem speciei; bonum

number of categories *secundum rem*, but they are ordered in relation to one another according to the different number of conceptual elements included in their essence *secundum rationem*.

Obviously, the terms *substantive*, *qualitative*, and *quantitative* are being used in an analogous way in this characterisation of the opposition between the different marks of the transcendentals. Nevertheless, we can make the final observation that, just as from the unity of (1) substance follows the unity of (2) quality, and (3) quantity, likewise, from (1) the ‘sameness’ or ‘identity’ of the transcendentals *secundum rem*, follows (2) their ‘likeness’ or ‘convertibility’, and (3) their ‘equality’ or ‘co-extension’, and just as from (1) their ‘diversity’ *secundum rationem*, follows (2) their ‘unlikeness’ or the ‘priority’ and ‘non-reciprocal inclusion’ of being as the first conception in relation to the others, and (3) their ‘inequality’ or ‘addition in order of proximity’.

Therefore, we can present the systematic nature of the six generic hallmarks of the transcendentals in the following table:

| <b>The six generic hallmarks of the transcendentals</b> | <i>secundum suppositum</i><br>or<br><i>secundum rem</i> | <i>secundum intentiones</i><br>or<br><i>secundum rationem</i> |
|---|---|---|
| (1) ‘substantive’                                       | ‘identity’  | ‘addition to being’   |
|   | ‘sameness’  | ‘diversity’   |
| (2) ‘qualitative’                                       | ‘convertibility’  | ‘priority of being’   |
|   | ‘likeness’  | ‘unlikeness’  |
| (3) ‘quantitative’                                      | ‘co-extension’  | ‘order of proximity’  |
|   | ‘equality’  | ‘inequality’  |

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autem non solum secundum rationem speciei, sed etiam secundum esse quod habet in re. *Et ita plura includit in se ratio boni quam ratio veri, et se habet quodammodo per additionem ad illam’.*

In the next chapter, we turn to an examination of which predicates are included in Aquinas's lists of those 'general' modes of being that share in these six generic hallmarks. However, before we do so, we can briefly re-visit the question of the *apparent* contradiction concerning the natural object of the human intellect, in order to highlight the unique significance of the relation between reason and reality.

To re-state the issue: Aquinas argues that every natural power has one object that it knows *per se* and *naturaliter*, and that for the human intellect this is being (*ens*); but he also states that there are a plurality of first conceptions that the human intellect knows naturally, such as the 'one' and other similar simple or 'incomplex' notions.<sup>77</sup> In the first section of this chapter, we observed that this plurality belongs to being *per se*, for the transcendentals are included in being unitedly and indistinctly, as in their principle. Furthermore, in this section we have explained the manner in which this plurality unfolds the primal fullness of being in such a way that the transcendentals are identical, convertible, and co-extensive with being *secundum rem*, and only differ from it *secundum rationem* as additions in a certain order of conceptual proximity to being. As such, the transcendentals are included within the infinite nature and scope of the first conception of the human intellect, as its inner modal determinations. What this means is that the human intellect has a natural object unlike that of any other natural power. For example, the natural object of sight is the visible, and that of hearing is the audible. These are finite and determinate objects, which can be distinguished according to the categorial division of being. However, the transcendentals do not belong to being in this way. They do not contract being into a special mode of being, instead, they are consequent upon every being. Consequently, their diversity is not that of different things, and so they express a unity that is intrinsically differentiated.<sup>78</sup> As such, the transcendentals explicate the multivalent

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<sup>77</sup> For example, *ScG* II, 83 (31); *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 1.

<sup>78</sup> In this respect, it is unsurprising that the thinkers of the Middle Ages analogously connected the transcendentals of the *one*, the *true*, and the *good*, respectively, with the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are distinct according to the origin of their relations, but wholly united in the simplicity of the divine *being* and essence. For example, *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8.

shape of human reason in its relation to its proper object: the intellect never encounters being in a one-dimensional mode of mere correspondence or representation, but always in the multi-dimensional mode of differentiated involvement; human reason is always immersed in being as one, true, good, and so forth, even if in the temporal order we are not wholly or consciously *aware* of the extent or fullness of our coordination to being. This anthropological dimension is in the forefront of *De veritate* 1.1, where Aquinas gives his most comprehensive derivation of the transcendental modes of being, which we will now discuss in specific detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DERIVATION OF SPECIFIC TRANSCENDENTALS

In the last chapter we established the six generic hallmarks of the transcendentals identified by Aquinas, and so now we turn to his various derivations of a list of specific transcendentals. In the first and second sections of this chapter, we will examine the most comprehensive of such derivations, which is found in *De veritate* 1.1, where Aquinas lists five transcendental or 'general' modes of being, namely, 'thing', 'one', 'something', 'true', and 'good'. In the first section, we will pay particular attention to the *ratio* of being (*ens*), in order further to clarify the basis upon which the other transcendentals are derived, as from a fullness that they conceptually unfold, and particularly its close connection with the transcendental 'thing' (*res*). In the second section, we will especially highlight the soul's unique relations to being in the orders of the true and the good, which will underline the anthropological significance of our subject in this study. In the third and final section, we will compare *De veritate* 1.1 with Aquinas's other derivations of specific transcendentals, in order to raise the question of the coherence of these different accounts with one another, and highlight the attempts of various scholars to deal with the perceived tensions between them. By the end of this chapter, not only will we have given a thorough treatment of Aquinas's various derivations of the transcendentals, but we will have also further clarified the *cumulative* nature belonging to the order of the transcendentals, and we will have raised the question of whether there is a place for all five of the transcendentals derived in *De veritate* 1.1 within that order. We will then be in a position, in the next chapter, to introduce the crucially important systematic framework of the *one* and the *many*, in order to answer this question, which, in turn, will lay the foundation for the

framework within which we will consider the implicit place of the beautiful within the order of the transcendentals in Aquinas's thought.

*The derivation of the transcendentals in De veritate 1.1:*

*(i) being, thing, one*

As we saw in the last chapter, in contrast to the *special* or *categorical* modes of being, which express the contraction of being into determinate and diverse grades or kinds of existence, Aquinas distinguishes the *general* or *transcendental* modes of being as expressing something that is consequent upon every being.<sup>1</sup> Next, he states that this general mode of being admits of a twofold distinction, according to whether it is consequent upon every being considered either absolutely and in itself (*in se*), or in relation to another (*in ordine ad aliud*).<sup>2</sup> We will examine the second aspect of this distinction in the next section of this chapter.

The general mode of being consequent upon every being considered absolutely (*in se*) admits of a further twofold distinction, according as it is predicated affirmatively or negatively.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Aquinas argues:

We can, however, find nothing that can be predicated of every being affirmatively and, at the same time, absolutely, with the exception of its essence by which the being is said to be. To express this, the term *thing* [*res*] is used; for, according to Avicenna, thing differs from being because being [*ens*] gets its name from to-be [*actu essendi*], but thing expresses the quiddity or essence of the being. There is, however, a negation consequent upon every being considered absolutely: its undividedness, and this is expressed by *one*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This division is systematic insofar as it differentiated according to the way in which being is, either, contracted to *one* determinate and finite mode of 'special' being, or, infinitely extended across the *many* in a mode of 'general' being.

<sup>2</sup> Again, this division is systematic insofar as it is likewise based upon the difference between the one (*in se*) and the many (*in ordine*).

<sup>3</sup> This division is systematic insofar as it is based upon the first axiom in the order of demonstration, namely, the principle of contradiction, that is, the impossibility of simultaneously affirming and negating.

<sup>4</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

In this first step, Aquinas enumerates two ‘general’ modes of being consequent upon every being considered *in se*: (1) ‘thing’ (*res*), which is predicated ‘affirmatively’, and expresses the quiddity or essence according to which a being is said to be; and (2) ‘one’ (*unum*), which is predicated ‘negatively’, a term that expresses the undividedness of a being, for nothing else is one than an undivided being.<sup>5</sup> In other words, ‘thing’ expresses the idea of *quiddity*, and ‘one’ that of *indivisibility*. This appears to be an exhaustive derivation of the general modes of being consequent upon every being *in se*. Aquinas explicitly says that *res* is the only general affirmation that we can make in this respect, and it seems that *unum* is implicitly the only general negation that can be made in this respect.<sup>6</sup>

In *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas does not further elaborate the rational character (*ratio*) of *res* and *unum*. The *ratio* of these terms will be a central concern of ours in the next chapter. At this stage we can make an important connection between the *special* or *categorial* modes of being, and the *general* mode of being expressed by ‘thing’ (*res*). Whereas the transcendentals belong to the *existential* reality of being itself, insofar as they are only rationally divided and substantially identical, the categories belong to the *essential* division of being by different substantial and accidental forms, which are not a reality outside of the essence of being, but are merely finite contractions or determinations of the fullness of *ens universale*. As such, each species in the ten genera

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: ‘nihil aliud enim est unum quam ens indivisum.’

<sup>6</sup> This is confirmed by comparison with Aquinas’s treatment of the *via negativa* in his treatise on the divine names in the *Summa theologiae* (I, qq. 3-11). He lists five essential negations that can be predicated of the divine essence: namely, God is totally *simple* (i.e., without any composition), universally *perfect* (i.e., without any defect; which means that, in a positive register, God is good), simply *infinite* (i.e., without any determination; which means that in a positive register, God is ubiquitous), altogether *immutable* (i.e., without any motion; which means that, in a positive register, God is eternal), and maximally *one* (i.e., without any division). Closely related to the notion of perfection is the affirmative notion of the good, which Aquinas states is *identical* and *co-extensive* with being (*STh* I, q. 5, aa. 1, 3). In *De veritate* 1.1, this expresses a general mode of being that is consequent upon every being insofar as it has a relation of agreement with another. Whereas the negations of *simplicity*, *infinity*, and *immutability* clearly cannot be consequent upon every being, by contrast, Aquinas argues that the *one* does not add any reality to being, but only signifies a negation of division, and so this metaphysical notion of unity is *convertible* with being (*STh* I, q. 11, a. 1 & a. 3 ad 2). In other words, we may draw the conclusion that *unum* is the only negation consequent upon every being *in se*.

of substance and accidents has its own form, essence, or quiddity by which it is distinct and mutually exclusive of the others. What this means is that 'thing' (*res*) is the transcendental or general expression of *categoriality*; that is, it is the transcendental which signifies the various kinds of contraction of being by the categories. As a notion, it is general enough to include everything contained under substance and accidents, and so it is co-extensive with being. As such, *res* is decidedly not one of the categories itself. It simply signifies categoriality in a general or generic manner.

Now, there is a very brief reference in the passage cited above, to that from which the predicate *ens* is named, which we must discuss further before examining the derivation of the other transcendentals. This is the first time that Aquinas gives a definition of the *ratio* of 'being' in *De veritate* 1.1, namely, that it is derived from the 'act of being' (*actu essendi*). In his reply to the third objection, he formulates this further in connection with Boethius's axiom, 'in all creatures, to be [*esse*] is other than that which is [*quod est*].'<sup>7</sup> He replies, 'the act of being is distinguished from that to which that act belongs. But the name of being [*entis*] is taken from the act of existence [*actu essendi*], not from that whose act it is.'<sup>8</sup> In other words, the term 'being' (*ens*) is taken from the act by which a being actually exists (*actu essendi*), and not from the notion of the specific being to whom that act belongs (*quod est*), which instead is signified by 'thing' (*res*) and its expression of the essence or quiddity of a being. As such, 'being' (*ens*) expresses the simple idea of *actuality*.

However, this does not mean that it expresses a merely abstract notion of actuality in contrast to the concrete reality of the one to whom that actuality belongs. This is apparent from Aquinas's more detailed analysis of the axiom just mentioned above in his commentary on Boethius's *De hebdomadibus*.<sup>9</sup> The diversity of 'that which is' (*quod est*) and the act 'to be' (*esse*), he argues, is not between two things (*res*), but

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<sup>7</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1 obj. 3: 'in omnibus creaturis diversum est esse et quod est'. See R. McNerny, *Boethius and Aquinas* (Washington, D.C., 1990), 161-98, for a survey of the ways in which this axiom has been interpreted.

<sup>8</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>9</sup> *In De hebdom.*, lect. 2.

between two different logical conceptions (*rationes* or *intentiones*). That is, it is a semantic and conceptual distinction. For instance, just as ‘to run’ (*currere*) and ‘a runner’ (*currens*) signify two different notions, so too, ‘to be’ (*esse*) and ‘that which is’ (*quod est*) do likewise. On the one hand, the infinitive terms, *esse* and *currere*, signify *in abstracto*, and on the other hand, the terms indicating *quod est*, namely, *ens* and *currens*, that is, those terms which refer to a subject, signify *in concreto*. In other words, ‘being’ might be named from the abstract and infinitive term ‘to be’, and not from the concrete subject to whom that act of being belongs, nevertheless, it refers to that subject, and in the concrete sense of ‘that which is’. Therefore, the ‘act of being’ (*esse*), from which ‘being’ (*ens*) is named, is not another thing that can be placed alongside ‘that which is’ (*quod est*), but is a logical abstraction. Accordingly, the diversity between *quod est* and *esse* lies simply in the mode of signification.

This point is underlined as Aquinas continues his commentary by discussing another of Boethius’s axioms, namely, ‘being itself is not yet’.<sup>10</sup> He argues, ‘to be’ itself (*ipsum esse*) is not signified as the subject of ‘being’, just as ‘to run’ (*currere*) is not signified as the subject of ‘running’. Just as we cannot say that ‘running itself’ runs, so we cannot say that ‘being itself’ is.<sup>11</sup> Rather, ‘that which is’ (*quod est*) is signified as the subsistent subject of ‘being’, just as ‘a runner’ is signified as the subject of ‘running’. Just as we can say of ‘that which runs’ or ‘a runner’ that they run, inasmuch as they are the subject of running and participate in it, so we can say that ‘being’ (*ens*), or ‘that which is’ (*quod est*), exists, because it participates in the act of being (*actus essendi*).<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, Aquinas explains, Boethius says that being itself (*ipsum esse*) does not yet exist, because it is not attributed to itself as to the subject of being. Rather, ‘that which

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 1, a. 1: ‘esse significat aliquid completum et simplex sed non subsistens; substantia autem aliquid subsistens significat sed alii subiectum.’ For a profound ‘speculative development’ and meditation on this theme in Aquinas’s thought, see Ulrich, *Homo Abyssus*.

<sup>12</sup> On the subject of participation, see Rudi A. Te Velde, *Participation and substantiality in Thomas Aquinas*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995).

is' (*quod est*) receives the act of being, and subsists in itself, so that 'being' is said *per se* of substance, and only of accidents inasmuch as by them a substance is something.<sup>13</sup>

As such, 'being', or 'that which is', signifies the act of being as concretized in a subject, whereas the act of being itself is an abstraction from the subject of being, signifying that act indeterminately.<sup>14</sup> As Aertsen puts it, the act of being (*esse*) is the 'inner principle of the concrete *ens*.'<sup>15</sup> This is clear from the following passage in the *Summa theologiae*:

existence [*ipsum esse*] is the most perfect of all things, for it is compared to all things as that by which they are made actual; for nothing has actuality except so far as it exists. Hence existence is that which actuates all things, even their forms. Therefore it is not compared to other things as the receiver is to the received; but rather as the received to the receiver. When therefore I speak of the existence of man, or horse, or anything else, existence is considered a formal principle, and as something received; and not as that which exists.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, Aquinas famously remarks in his *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia dei*, any form, such as humanity or fire, for instance, is understood to exist only by virtue of the fact that it is said 'to be', such that, being (*esse*) is the 'actuality of all acts, and therefore the perfection of all perfections.'<sup>17</sup> As Ferdinand Ulrich would put it, *esse* is 'pure mediation', a gift that never *holds onto itself*, nor exists in itself – being is 'nothing' itself – but subsists only ever as *always already* having been given away in another.<sup>18</sup>

Accordingly, the predicate 'being' does not signify an abstract conception of existence, but 'that which is' (*quod est*), the concrete, subsisting subject that participates

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<sup>13</sup> *In De hedom.* lect. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Set id quod est siue ens, quamuis sit communissimum, tamen concretive dicitur.'

<sup>15</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 192.

<sup>16</sup> *STh* I, q. 4, a. 1 ad 3. Cf. *In I Perih.*, lect. 5 (22).

<sup>17</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2 ad 9: 'esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum.' Cf. 'The distinctive feature of Thomas's understanding of being is the notion of "actuality." In his own judgment he differs in this respect from Aristotle, who conceived "being" as the quiddity of something.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 185-86. This is also a very different understanding of the *ratio entis* than that held by Scotus, who understood being from its logical possibility, based upon the principle of contradiction: 'ens, hoc est, cui non repugnat esse'. See *Ordinatio* IV, d. 8, q. 1, n. 2 (ed. Vivès XVII, 7b). By contrast, Aquinas argued that the concept of being is the foundation of the first principle of demonstration.

<sup>18</sup> See Ulrich, *Homo Abyssus*, 28-46.

in the act of being. As Aertsen explains, this provides an important clarification for what Aquinas means when he says that *ens* is the first conception of the intellect:

Being (*ens*), while the most general, is said “concretely;” it signifies the concretion of subject and act. This explains why the *ratio* of being has a certain complexity; it means “what has being.” In view of the diversity of meaning between *esse* and *ens* it is not irrelevant that in Thomas’s philosophy the first conception of the intellect is “being” (*ens*), not *esse*... the first known is the concrete “what is,” not “to be.”<sup>19</sup>

In other words, the *resolutio* in *De veritate* 1.1 is not to some abstract conception of being in general, but to the mind’s encounter with concrete being: *ens* is the *primum intelligibile* because it signifies that which has concrete actuality, and something is knowable insofar as it is in act.<sup>20</sup>

As Aertsen further highlights, this also means that there is a peculiarity about ‘thing’, for it is the only transcendental based on an element in the complex concept of being itself.<sup>21</sup> As Aquinas himself argues, the definition of being as ‘that which is’ (*quod est*) contains an implicit reference to ‘thing’ (*res*): ‘*ens* is nothing other than *quod est*, and so it signifies both *rem*, when I say *quod* and *esse* when I say *est*.’<sup>22</sup> Thus, ‘being’ (*ens*) signifies ‘that which is’, yet is named from the ‘act of being’, and not that whose act it is. Whilst it signifies something concrete, it does not signify any determinate mode of being. That is, it does not indicate the identity of ‘that which is’ (which is signified by *res*), rather, *ens* merely signifies ‘that which is’. Likewise, the close connection of *ens* and *res* in the complex notion of ‘that which is’ (*quod est*) is also reflected in the fact that Aquinas includes these two in the order of formal causality.

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<sup>19</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 187. Ulrich actually elides this difference by re-phrasing Aquinas’s statement concerning the first conception of the human intellect in *De veritate* 1.1, namely that it is *esse* and not *ens*. See *Homo Abyssus*, 11.

<sup>20</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 3: ‘Unumquodque autem in quantum habet de esse, intantum est cognoscibile.’

<sup>21</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 198.

<sup>22</sup> *In I Perih.*, lect. 5 (20). My translation. Aquinas clarifies that *is* in ‘that which is’ does not signify a composition that would belong to the second operation of the intellect, namely, judgement, which would admit of truth and falsity. Instead, it signifies the act of being in the mode of a verb, so that the first operation of the intellect attains to a knowledge of being (*ens*), as ‘that which is’, which signifies ‘what is’, and not a proposition that ‘something exists’. See *In I Perih.*, lect. 5 (20-22). Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 179-80.

This is an obvious point in relation to *res*, and that from which it is named, that is, the essence or quiddity of a being, which proceeds from the divine intellect as a participation in a similitude of the divine ideas, and by which it produces knowledge in the human intellect according to an intelligible *species* of the form of that which is known.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, as we saw above, Aquinas describes existence itself as a ‘formal principle’ that actuates all forms.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, he often states that being has the aspect of a *formal* cause.<sup>25</sup> The significance of this point will be developed in the chapters that follow.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, Aquinas distinguishes a twofold *ratio* of *res*.<sup>27</sup> First, it has an ontological signification *simpliciter*, denoting that which has existence in a ratified and firm nature [*quod habet esse raturm et firmum in natura*]. As such, *res* signifies the quiddity or essence of a thing, whereas *ens* signifies that the thing has existence. Secondly, *res* also has a cognitive signification, because it is by way of its essence that the identity of a thing is knowable, and so the name ‘thing’ extends to all that can fall within knowledge or understanding. In respect of this, Aquinas highlights the fact that the word *res* is taken from *reor* (‘to think’), and in this way, that which does not possess an established and firm existence in nature, such as negations and privations, that is, ‘beings of reason’, can also be called ‘things’. In *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas states that ‘thing’ (*res*) signifies an essence by which a being (*ens*) is said to have its act of being (*esse*).<sup>28</sup> In this sense, the terms *ens* and *res* signify the same concrete reality, but they differ *secundum rationem* according as this reality can be called *res* from the

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<sup>23</sup> *STh* I, q. 15, a. 2; q. 85, aa. 1, 2.

<sup>24</sup> *STh* I, q. 4, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>25</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 2 ad 2.

<sup>26</sup> For now, we will simply state the point that, in terms of the Augustinian triad *mode-species-order*, both *ens* and *res* are signified by the same note. For example, *res* signifies the essence or form of being, which, in turn, is signified by *species* (e.g., *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5: ‘forma significatur per speciem’), and *ens* is likewise signified by *species* (e.g., *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 obj. 2: ‘ratio entis consistit in specie...’). We will return to this point in chapter four.

<sup>27</sup> *In II Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>28</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1: ‘essentia eius, secundum quam esse dicitur; et sic imponitur hoc nomen res’.

perspective of its quiddity, or *ens* from the perspective of its actuality. We might say that *ens* foregrounds the idea *that* something is, whereas *res* foregrounds the idea of *what* something is. As Aquinas puts it in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*:

even though a thing's existence is other than its essence, it should not be understood to be something added to its essence after the manner of an accident, but something established [*constituitur*], as it were, by the principles of the essence. Hence the name 'being,' which is applied to a thing by reason of its very existence, designates the same thing as the term applied to it by reason of its essence.<sup>29</sup>

That is, a being is 'established' or 'constituted' by its essence in the sense that *essentia* is that through which and in which the *ens* has *esse*.<sup>30</sup> This brings us to an important point that we must discuss before we move onto the next stage in Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 1.1.

Aquinas's interpreters have often emphasised the importance in his thought of the *real distinction* between being and essence that composes all creatures, namely, that in every finite being *what* it is and *that* it is are really distinct.<sup>31</sup> Such a distinction is necessary to ground the contingency and finitude of creaturely existence, in contrast to the identity of essence and existence in God, who exists necessarily.<sup>32</sup> As such, the real distinction expresses the fact that existence and essence are not identical, because existence must be *given* to a creaturely essence, since that essence cannot exist by itself. However, this real distinction of existence and essence would seem to contradict Aquinas's insistence that the transcendental terms 'being' (*ens*), which is named from

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<sup>29</sup> *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 2 (558).

<sup>30</sup> *De Ente et Essentia*, 1.11: 'Quiditatis vero nomen sumitur ex hoc, quod per diffinitionem significatur. Sed essentia dicitur secundum quod per eam et in ea ens habet esse.'

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence: A Translation and Interpretation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 168-70. Cf. John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 132-76. Bobik holds that the *intellectus essentiae* argument is sufficient to establish the real distinction, whereas Wippel argues that it is only sufficiently established with the additional argument that a being in whom existence and essence are identical necessarily must be utterly unique, i.e., only God. See *De Ente et Essentia*, cap. 1 (11).

<sup>32</sup> *STh* I, q. 3, a. 7 ad 1.

the act 'to-be' (*esse*), and 'thing' (*res*), which refers to the quiddity or essence of a being, are not really distinct *secundum rem*, but differ only conceptually *secundum rationem*.

However, we must remember that the real distinction is not between two 'things' which are bolted together, so to speak, as if they could exist prior to one another. Instead, existence and essence are the metaphysical 'co-principles' that constitute the creature.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, this is not the coming together of two different things, as if they could be creaturely realities outside of one another. Rather, these two metaphysical co-principles come together in the act of *creatio ex nihilo*. As such, *on this side of the act of creation*, so to speak, they form the unity of the creature, and so it is quite right to say that as transcendental predicates, *ens* and *res*, being and essence, are not distinct in the reality of nature, but only conceptually. The creature is truly one, in terms of the union of its essence and existence, which do not constitute a composite of two things, but are related to one another as potentiality to act.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, we can look 'behind' the creature's coming to be, so to speak, and discern the 'real' distinction, that is, the non-identity of its essence and existence. In this sense, the *reality* of the real distinction is not 'located' temporally between two things (this kind of distinction is what is being negated when Aquinas says that the transcendentals are only conceptually distinct). Rather, it is an ontological distinction integral to the metaphysics of creation. That is, essence and existence are really two distinct principles which are brought together by God in the *eternal* act of creation. As such,

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<sup>33</sup> As W. Norris Clarke, S.J. argues, Aquinas masterfully brought together the Aristotelian doctrine of act and potency and the Neoplatonic participation-limitation framework, in positing the composition of the creature in terms of a union between 'two incomplete, correlative principles', namely, the supra-formal act of existence that is participated by the different forms or essences of created natures as by limited potencies. See, 'The Limitation of Act by Potency in St. Thomas: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?' in *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being-God-Person* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 65-88, esp. 79-81. Cf. *Quodlibet*. III, q. 8, a. 20; *ScG I*, 18 & 43.

<sup>34</sup> *De substantiis separatis*, cap. 8 (42): 'Ipsium igitur esse per se subsistens est unum tantum. Impossibile est igitur quod praeter ipsum sit aliquid subsistens quod sit esse tantum. Omne autem quod est, esse habet. Est igitur in quocumque, praeter primum, et ipsum esse, tanquam actus; et substantia rei habens esse, tanquam potentia receptiva huius actus quod est esse.'

we do not perceive this real distinction as a contemporary *feature* of creaturely existence, but as its ontological *condition*.<sup>35</sup>

*The derivation of the transcendentals in De veritate 1.1:*

(ii) *something, good, true*

Returning to Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 1.1, the second general mode of being is consequent upon every being considered in relation to another (*in ordine ad aliud*). This also admits of a twofold distinction, insofar as it is predicated according to either the division (*divisionem*) or the agreement (*convenientiam*) of one thing in relation to another.<sup>36</sup> Aquinas states that the *division* of one being from another is expressed by the name 'something' (*aliquid*), which has the signification of 'another thing' (*aliud quid*), and as a being is said to be *one* insofar as it is without division in itself, so it is said to be *something* insofar as it is divided from others. As Aertsen notes, Alexander of Hales and Albert the Great defined the one as 'being undivided in itself and divided from others', a formulation which Aquinas has divided into two, ascribing the first half to 'one' (undivided in itself), and the second half to 'something' (divided from others).<sup>37</sup> In this way, there is a contrary relationship between *unum* and *aliquid* according to the opposition between the 'one' and the 'many', the 'undivided' and the 'divided'. But as we will see in the next chapter, if the *ratio* of 'one' expresses the *indivisibility* or undividedness of a being, the *ratio* of 'something', strictly speaking, does not express the *divisibility* or dividedness of a

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Leo J. Elders, S.V.D., *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 151-52.

<sup>36</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. This division is systematic insofar as it based upon the division of the *one* and the *many*, insofar as those things that agree with one another are *one* in some way, and those things that are divided are *many*.

<sup>37</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 98-99.

being, but rather its *diversity*.<sup>38</sup> Again, the derivation of *aliquid* is exhaustive of the general mode of being consequent upon every being insofar as it is divided in relation to others, for Aquinas says that this mode is expressed simply by the term ‘something’. Furthermore, the comparison he makes with the ‘one’ places it within the systematic framework of the one and the many, in which ‘something’ expresses the idea of a being in its ‘diversity’ from others, as opposed to its ‘sameness’ or unity with others.

Now, the derivation of *aliquid* lays the foundation for the next category of general modes of being enumerated by Aquinas in *De veritate* 1.1, namely, those which are consequent upon every being insofar as it *agrees* in relation to another. As Aertsen argues, the division between one being and another expressed by the name ‘something’ is the ‘first condition’ of the relational transcendentals, namely, the presupposition of another to which something can be related.<sup>39</sup> However, Aquinas explicitly introduces a more fundamental condition of his own, that is, the prerequisite existence of something that is naturally apt to agree with every being, namely, the human soul, which Aristotle described as *in a certain manner, all things*.<sup>40</sup> As we commented in the introduction, this is a remarkably significant statement. The human soul is a natural form that not only determines its subject to its own particular nature and being, but is also receptive of the forms of all things through sense and

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<sup>38</sup> This distinction between ‘division’ and ‘diversity’ is highly significant in relation to the question concerning the systematic order of the transcendentals. Whilst the terms ‘thing’ and ‘something’ are included in *De veritate* 1.1, they are not included in any other list that Aquinas gives. However, their inclusion is essential, and this can only be seen if we properly distinguish between the ideas of division and diversity. As we will see in the next chapter, it is ‘thing’ (*res*) that expresses the *divisibility* of a being by virtue of its *quiddity*, and this notion of division is presupposed and negated by the ‘one’, whereas ‘something’ (*aliquid*) expresses the *diversity* of a being, signifying the idea of some-other-*quid*. See Michael J. Rubin, ‘The Places of ‘Thing’ and ‘Something’ in Aquinas’s Order of the Transcendentals,’ *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, Volume 81, Number 3, July 2017, 395-436. Cf. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 186-190.

<sup>39</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 110 & 222.

<sup>40</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. Aristotle, *De anima* III, 8, 431b21; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6: ‘relatio ad aliquid quod natum sit referri universaliter ad ens’. As Aertsen argues, ‘This conformity can be seen as an explication and consequence of the *resolutio* to a first conception. Being is the first known, which means it is the proper object of the intellect. When Thomas now states that the soul has an openness to all that is, then a “conformity” between spirit and being is expressed that was already implicit in the thesis that being is the first known.’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 99.

intellect.<sup>41</sup> In other words, the form 'humanity' (i.e., *anima*) does not simply narrow down human being to a finite *category* or determinate mode of being, it also establishes a mode of being that is receptive of the *transcendental* scope of being itself, for it can receive an intelligible likeness or *species* of 'all things': the human soul is *capax universi*. We might say that the human soul is a unique likeness of being itself. Just as being can be contracted by all the forms or species of all substances and accidents, similarly, the human being can be specified to a determinate act of understanding by the intelligible likeness of all things.<sup>42</sup> As Aertsen puts it, because of its immateriality, the rational soul possesses a 'transcendental openness' through its two powers of cognition and appetite, and so, Aquinas derives two corresponding modes by which the soul can agree with every being.<sup>43</sup>

On the one hand, the 'good' (*bonum*) expresses the agreement of being to the soul's appetitive power, and so it is defined as 'what all desire' (*quod omnia appetunt*).<sup>44</sup> In *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas does not develop this point any further. Over the course of this study we will examine the notion of the good in more detail, but for now we can simply observe that the predicate 'good' expresses the intrinsic *desirability* of every being.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the 'true' expresses the agreement of being to the soul's knowing power, and since all knowledge is completed through the assimilation of the

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<sup>41</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 1.

<sup>42</sup> In this respect, it is a likeness of divine being. Ibid: 'sicut sensus recipit species omnium sensibilium, et intellectus omnium intelligibilium, ut sic anima hominis sit omnia quodammodo secundum sensum et intellectum, in quo quodammodo cognitionem habentia ad Dei similitudinem appropinquant, in quo omnia praeexistunt, sicut Dionysius dicit.'

<sup>43</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 184. Aertsen also argues (ibid., 257): 'Thomas's important innovation in the doctrine of the transcendentals is the correlation he introduces between *anima* and being. He understands the transcendentals 'true' and 'good' in relation to the faculties of a spiritual substance, man. His doctrine, we might say, manifests an 'anthropocentrism'. We note, for the final time, that this derivation of the true and the good seems to be exhaustive and systematic. For the first time in *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas derives two transcendentals in the same precise category, but this is because the true and the good are correlated to the soul's two powers of intellect and will. One of our principal tasks in this study, therefore, is to examine whether Aquinas's anthropology of the soul permits the inclusion of the beautiful as consequent upon every being insofar as it agrees in relation to these two powers taken together. Indeed, in chapter seven we will argue that the beautiful is the relation of being to the will *through* the intellect.'

<sup>44</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>45</sup> See *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1.

knower to the thing known, this assimilation is said to be the cause of knowledge.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Aquinas argues, the first comparison of being to the intellect is the concordance between the two, which is called the ‘adequation’ of intellect and thing (*res*), and in this the formal *ratio* of the true comes to completion. This conformity or adequation of thing and intellect is what the ‘true’ adds to ‘being’.<sup>47</sup> From this conformity follows the knowledge of the thing, as an effect of truth, and preceding the *ratio* of truth is the entity itself of the thing.<sup>48</sup> Aquinas concludes his discussion in *De veritate* 1.1 by explaining the three ways in which we can define truth.<sup>49</sup> First, ontologically, as *that which is*, inasmuch as the entity of a thing precedes, and is the foundation of, the *ratio veri*.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, logically and properly, as *the adequation of thing and intellect*, in which the formality of the *ratio veri* is brought to completion.<sup>51</sup> Thirdly, causally, as *that which manifests existence*, inasmuch as knowledge of a thing is the consequence of its truth, that is, a consequence of the thing’s conformity with the intellect of the one knowing. With this Aquinas has arrived at an answer to the question posed at the beginning of *De veritate* 1.1, ‘what is truth?’ The predicate ‘true’ (*verum*) expresses a general mode of being that is consequent upon every being considered in relation to another, namely, a relation of ‘conformity’ or ‘adequation’ between being and the soul’s power of intellect. As such, the predicate ‘true’ expresses the intrinsic *intelligibility* of every being.

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<sup>46</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>47</sup> It is significant that another transcendental, namely, ‘thing’ (*res*), enters into the definition of the ‘true’ (*verum*). Over the course of this study, I will seek to demonstrate that ‘one’ (*unum*) and ‘something’ (*aliquid*) similarly enter into the definition of the ‘beautiful’ (*pulchrum*) and the ‘good’ (*bonum*), respectively, even if this is not made explicit by Aquinas, as it is in his connection of *res* and *verum*.

<sup>48</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>49</sup> See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 244-46.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 5: ‘quod est maxime ens, est maxime verum. Unde nec hoc ideo est quia ens et verum ratione sunt idem, sed quia secundum hoc quod aliquid habet de entitate, secundum hoc est natum adaequari intellectui; et sic ratio veri sequitur rationem entis.’

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1: ‘et unumquodque ens in tantum dicitur verum, in quantum est conformatum vel conformabile intellectui; et ideo omnes recte definientes verum, ponunt in eius definitione intellectum.’

Aquinas concludes *De veritate* 1.1 by giving a threefold definition of truth, yet in the course of the discussion he has outlined his most comprehensive derivation of a list of specific transcendentals.<sup>52</sup> These transcendentals express general ‘modes of being’ not explicit in the term *ens* that are consequent upon every being. This is not the real addition of anything extrinsic to the essence of being, and they are differentiated from the categorial division of being into different kinds or grades of existent things. This *general* or transcendental mode is twofold. The first way follows upon every being in itself (*in se*), in which case there is one mode of being that is said ‘affirmatively’, namely, ‘thing’ (*res*), and one that is said ‘negatively’, namely, ‘one’ (*unum*). The second follows upon every being in relation to another (*in ordine ad aliud*), in which case there is one mode of being according to the division of one thing from another, namely, ‘something’ (*aliquid*), and another according to the agreement of being to the soul. This latter is divided according to the soul’s two spiritual powers of intellect and will. The ‘good’ (*bonum*) is the agreement of being with the will, and the ‘true’ (*verum*) is the conformity of being with the intellect. Thus, in *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas derives five transcendental modes of ‘being’ (*ens*): *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *bonum*, *verum*. Moreover, this scheme appears to have an exhaustive and comprehensive force: ‘thing’ is the only transcendental that is predicated ‘affirmatively’ of being considered in itself; ‘one’ is the only transcendental that is predicated ‘negatively’ of being considered in itself; ‘something’ is the only transcendental predicated ‘negatively’ of being considered in relation to another; and because the soul has two spiritual powers, there are only two positive ‘relational’ transcendentals, namely, ‘true’ and ‘good’. This categorisation can be represented as follows:

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<sup>52</sup> Michael M. Waddell argues that this list is not intended to be exhaustive, since Aquinas’s intention is simply to define the nature of truth. Those transcendentals enumerated by Aquinas are only done so in order to rule out certain ‘(onto)logical’ possibilities *en route* towards the clarification of the *ratio* of the true. See ‘Truth or Transcendentals,’ esp. 209-13. Our concern is not about the historical intention of Aquinas in *De veritate* 1.1. However, we have noted in this chapter that there is a systematic and even exhaustive character to Aquinas’s discussion. Nevertheless, our greater concern is to penetrate to the inner logic of his metaphysical thought more generally, in order to discover a systematic comprehensiveness that necessarily includes the ‘beautiful’ (*pulchrum*).

| <b>General modes of being consequent upon every being</b> | <i>said negatively</i>         | <i>said affirmatively</i>                          |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>considered absolutely</i>                              | 'one' ( <i>unum</i> )          | 'thing' ( <i>res</i> )                             |
| <i>considered relationally</i>                            | 'something' ( <i>aliquid</i> ) | 'true' ( <i>verum</i> )<br>'good' ( <i>bonum</i> ) |

Furthermore, there is a certain elegance to this derivation. Together with being, these five transcendentals can be arranged into three pairs that delineate three fundamental distinctions within finite being. First, *ens* and *res* signify the interior composition of existence and essence in every creature. Secondly, *unum* and *aliquid* signify the exterior division of being in terms of the one and the many. Thirdly, *verum* and *bonum* express the agreement of the one with the existence and essence of the many, according to the soul's relation to being through its intrinsically differentiated powers of intellect and will.

Another noteworthy aspect is the innovative inclusion of 'thing' and 'something'. This marks a departure from the consensus among Aquinas's predecessors, Philip the Chancellor, Alexander of Hales, and Albert the Great, all of whom derive only 'one', 'true', and 'good' as transcendental modes of 'being'.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, these two additions have an 'Arabic patrimony', for they are listed as transcendentals in Avicenna's *Metaphysics*.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, as Michael J. Rubin notes, *res* and *aliquid* are indispensable in the order of the transcendentals in *De Veritate* 1.1. If a transcendental can express a general mode of being, first, in itself, either affirmatively or negatively, or secondly, in relation, either by division or agreement, then 'thing' and 'something' have positions of priority within this framework: *res* is the first

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<sup>53</sup> See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 25-70. Jordan argues that the one, the true, and the good constitute the 'irreducible list' of transcendentals in Aquinas. See, 'The Evidence of the Transcendentals,' 393.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 102. Cf. *Transcendental Thought*, 79-100.

transcendental said of being in itself; *aliquid* is the first said of being in relation; and each is the only term in its category.<sup>55</sup> However, as he also observes, ‘almost immediately after making this daring addition to the list of transcendentals, Thomas seems to take it back’.<sup>56</sup> For, neither of these terms are included in Aquinas’s derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 21.1, nor in any of the lists that appear in works written after *De veritate*.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, in this text it seems as though *res* is systematically excluded by a particular condition under which Aquinas states that it is possible to add to being. The resolution of this apparent tension is a crucial element in the determination of the systematic order of the transcendentals.

#### *Tensions in Aquinas’s derivations of the transcendentals?*

As we noted in chapter one, the question under consideration in *De veritate* 21.1 is whether the good adds anything to being. Aquinas argues that there is nothing outside of being that could be added to it extraneously, and also that the good cannot add to being in the way that the ten genera do – by limiting and contracting it to a determinate mode of being – since, like ‘being’, it is equally divided by the ten genera. Therefore, since the good is not synonymous with being, it must add something purely *rational* or *conceptual*. By contrast, if the good added something *real*, being would have to be contracted by the *ratio* of the good to some special genus. Furthermore, a merely conceptual addition happens when that which is added belongs to the *ratio* of the one and not to the other, yet is nothing *real* in nature, but only something in reason, whether it limits that to which it is added or not. Accordingly, in both *De veritate* 1.1 and 21.1, Aquinas derives the transcendentals (1)

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<sup>55</sup> Rubin, ‘“Thing” and “Something” among the Transcendentals,’ 403.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>57</sup> Notwithstanding this, in *STh* I, q. 39, a. 3 ad 3, written almost a decade after *De veritate*, Aquinas states that ‘thing’ is a transcendental name: ‘hoc nomen res est de transcendentibus.’

upon the basis of the impossibility of adding something extraneous in reality to being, (2) in contrast to the categorial addition to being by the ten genera, and (3) as merely conceptual or modal additions that express something not explicit in the term *ens* itself. However, in *De veritate* 21.1 he issues a very important statement concerning the parameters of such a conceptual addition: what is merely conceptual can be of only two kinds, namely, negation or a certain kind of relation, since every 'absolute positing', by contrast, signifies something existing in the reality of nature.<sup>58</sup> This statement forms the basis of Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 21.1.

To 'being' (*ens*), the first conception of the intellect, 'one' (*unum*) adds what is merely conceptual, namely, a negation, for it signifies undivided being (*ens indivisum*). But 'true' and 'good' are predicated positively, for which reason it is not possible for them to add anything other than a relation that is only conceptual. We might ask, why is this the case? Aquinas explains that a conceptual or rational relation is what we might call *non-reciprocal* or *asymmetric*: the object of the relation does not depend upon the subject to which it is related, but the subject does depend upon the object. Aquinas illustrates this with the example of the object of knowledge, which is not dependent upon the one in whom it produces knowledge. The relation by which knowledge in the *subject* is referred to its object is *real*, but the relation by which the *object* known is referred to that knowledge is only *rational*.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the object is related, not because it is itself referred, but because something else is referred to it. Aquinas states that this pertains in all other things which stand to one another as measure and thing measured, or as the perfective to the perfectible.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 21: 'Id autem quod est rationis tantum, non potest esse nisi duplex, scilicet negatio et aliqua relatio. Omnis enim positio absoluta aliquid in rerum natura existens significat.'

<sup>59</sup> This does not negate the fact that it is part of a creature's *telos* to be known. See, for instance, *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 s.c. ad 4.

<sup>60</sup> A parallel can be found in Aquinas's doctrine of creation, namely, that in God relation to the creature is not a real relation but only a relation of reason, whereas the relation of the creature to God is real. See *STh* I, q. 45, a. 3 ad 1.

This is an important point, because if the true and the good added relations that were not purely conceptual or rational, then they could not be transcendentals. For instance, the third objection argues that a ‘related being’ (*ens relatum*) falls within a determinate genus of being, namely a relation of a thing ‘to something’ (*quod est ad aliquid*), and so it would seem that the good (and the true for that matter), which adds a relation to being, falls into one determinate category of the *praedicamenta*, rather than being found in all the genera as a transcendental.<sup>61</sup> However, Aquinas replies that whereas every *real* relation is in a determinate genus, by contrast, *non-real* or *rational* relations can ‘run through’ every being.<sup>62</sup> In other words, the true and the good can only add *rational* or *conceptual* relations to being, because if what they added was a real relation of some kind, then this would contract being to a determinate and mutually exclusive category, and so they would not be *transcendental* across all the categories. Moreover, if the truth or goodness of being depended on such a real relation, then this would also mean that a being could not be called true or good unless it was in a state of actually being related to the intellect or will of a human subject. If no such relation actually existed, then a being could not be true simply because of its intrinsic being *qua* being. Ultimately, the truth and goodness of every being is grounded in its relation to God, whose intellect measures all things in their truth, and directs them in their goodness, and because these relations essentially constitute every being in its very existence, truth and goodness are convertible with being in every creature.<sup>63</sup> Of course, these relations are not *real* in God, but only *rational*, but in the creature the relation to God is decidedly *real*.

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<sup>61</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1 obj. 3.

<sup>62</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1 ad 3: ‘omnis relation realis est in genere determinatio, sed relations non reales possunt circuire omne ens.’

<sup>63</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 2; q. 21, a. 4; *STh* I, q. 16, a. 1; q. 6, a. 4. For the debate about the transcendental status of truth in Aquinas, see Lawrence Dewan, ‘Is Truth a Transcendental for St. Thomas Aquinas?’ *Nova et Vetera* 2 (2004): 1-20. Cf. Jan Aertsen, ‘Is Truth Not a Transcendental for Aquinas?’ in *Wisdom’s Apprentice: Thomistic Essays in Honor of Lawrence Dewan, O.P.*, ed. Peter A. Kwasniewski (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2007); John F. Wippel, ‘Truth in Thomas Aquinas,’ in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II*, vol. 47, *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007). See also Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth*, esp. 29-49. In relation to this

Returning to Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 21.1, because the relation of the perfective to the perfectible is also a *rational* or *conceptual* relation, and not a *real* one, Aquinas concludes: 'The true and the good must therefore add to the concept of being, a relationship of that which perfects.'<sup>64</sup> Next, he observes that there are two aspects in every being by which it can be perfective of another, namely, the formal or rational character of its species (*ipsam rationem speciei*), and also the act of being (*ipsum esse*) by which it subsists in that species. Accordingly, a being can be perfective in one of two ways. First, according to its *species* alone, and in this way the intellect is perfected by a being, that is, by perceiving its formal character without the intellect possessing that being according to its natural existence (*esse naturale*).<sup>65</sup> This mode of perfecting is what the 'true' adds to 'being', for the true is in the mind (*in mente*), and every being is called true insofar as it is conformed or conformable to intellect, and so Aquinas argues that all who correctly define truth put intellect in its definition.<sup>66</sup> Secondly, a being is perfective of another not only according to its *species*, but also according to the act of being which it has in the reality of nature. This is the mode in which the 'good' is perfective, for the good is in things (*in rebus*), and inasmuch as one being according to its *esse* is perfective and consummative of another, it has the aspect of an end in respect of that which it completes, and so the good is defined as 'what all desire' (*quod omnia appetunt*). Therefore, the good is said principally of a being that is perfective of another in the mode of an end, and

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question, Schindler contends that, because a rational relation is non-reciprocal and wholly one-sided, it is no relationship at all. Therefore, he argues, 'In order to justify the existence of the transcendental determinations of being at all, we have to reject a simple opposition between rational and real relations.' See *The Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 359-60. Of course, such a radical rejection strikes at the bedrock of Aquinas's thought, and so assessing this argument lies outside of the scope of our study, which seeks to think with Aquinas's thought in relation to the question of the beautiful.

<sup>64</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3: 'Vero enim non sunt nata perfici nisi illa quae possunt aliquod ens percipere in seipsis vel in seipsis habere secundum suam rationem, et non secundum illud esse quod ens habet in seipso: et huiusmodi sunt solum ea quae immaterialiter aliquid recipiunt, et sunt cognoscitiva; species enim lapidis est in anima non autem secundum esse quod habet in lapide.'

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *ScG* I, 60 (2): 'Veritas enim quaedam perfectio est intelligentiae, sive intellectualis operationis'.

secondarily of that which leads to an end or that which naturally follows upon a certain end.

To summarise, Aquinas's derivation in *De veritate* 21.1 is built upon the premise that being is the first conception of the intellect, and that the transcendentals can only add to it *secundum rationem*. Furthermore, such a conceptual addition can only be according to one of two kinds: negation or relation. 'One' adds a negation, namely, *ens indivisum*, and 'true' and 'good' add a relation according to which a being is perfective of another: according to *species* alone, in the case of the 'true'; and according to *species* and *esse*, in the case of the 'good'. Thus, Aquinas derives three transcendental additions to 'being' (*ens*): *unum, verum, bonum*.

In comparison to *De veritate* 1.1, one obvious difference, which we have mentioned already, is that only the names 'one', 'true', and 'good' are included, and that the terms 'thing' and 'something' are omitted. In this respect, the list given in *De veritate* 21.1 is very similar to Aquinas's two other general derivations of the transcendentals, which appear in *Scriptum super libros sententiarum* and *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*.<sup>67</sup> These two derivations are also premised upon the idea that being is the first conception of the intellect. Similarly, they both affirm that the only addition that the transcendentals can make to being is conceptual, otherwise the addition of any natural reality by which being would be contracted would compromise their status as *prima*. Furthermore, both texts similarly limit this conceptual addition to either a negation, which is what 'one' adds to 'being', i.e., *indivision*, or a relation, which is what 'good' and 'true' add.

However, these three texts all differ in terms of how Aquinas grounds the two 'relational' transcendentals of truth and goodness. In *De veritate* 21.1, this is done in terms of the non-reciprocal dependency of 'relations of reason', which characterises the relationship between the perfective and the perfectible. By contrast, in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, it is done by connection with different

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<sup>67</sup> In *I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6.

modes of causality: the good adds to being a relation to the end, and the true adds a relation either to the exemplar form, since anything is called true from the fact that it imitates the divine exemplar, or to a cognitive power, since we call something true from the fact that it has a form that it shows, according to which a true judgement is made of it.<sup>68</sup> Finally, in *De potentia*, just as in *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas grounds the true and the good in the powers of the soul, 'which by its very nature is universally referable to being', such that the true bears a relation to the intellect, and the good to the appetite.<sup>69</sup>

Nonetheless, the fact that the true and the good are grounded in different ways in these texts is not problematic. As Aertsen explains, these two are *relational* transcendentals, so they can be viewed from the perspective of either term in that relation, namely, being or the soul.<sup>70</sup> In *De veritate* 1.1, the question under consideration is the nature of truth, which is *in mente*, so the relational transcendentals are viewed from the perspective of the soul's two powers of cognition and appetite. Similarly, in the passage from *De potentia*, Aquinas is considering the *prima* of the human intellect, so it is natural to ground the true and the good in the same way. By contrast, the question under consideration in *De veritate* 21.1 is the nature of goodness, which is *in rebus*, so the relational transcendentals are viewed from the perspective of the twofold way in which a being is perfective of others. We can also explain Aquinas's approach in the passage from his commentary on the *Sentences* by the fact that the relation of truth to intellect and goodness to appetite is fundamentally grounded in the relation of all finite being to the divine intellect and will, the former acting as the intelligible measure of all beings,<sup>71</sup> and the latter directing them towards the divine

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<sup>68</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3. Aquinas argues that according to the order of causality (*secundum rationem causalitatis*) the good is prior to being, because the good signifies the final cause, whereas being signifies the exemplar and efficient cause in God, and the end is the first cause in the order of causality. Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>69</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6.

<sup>70</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 103 & 262.

<sup>71</sup> *STh I*, q. 16, a. 1.

goodness.<sup>72</sup> After all, in this text Aquinas is considering the *communia* in connection to their attribution as divine names.

The more important issue is the different ways in which Aquinas divides the transcendentals. Like *De veritate* 1.1, the other three texts divide the transcendentals into two groups, but whereas the former makes a division in terms of whether a transcendental is predicated of a being considered in itself or in relation to another, the other three all make a distinction between the conceptual addition of either a negation or a relation. This brings us to the heart of the tension between *De veritate* 1.1 and 21.1. For, in the latter, Aquinas explicitly specifies that the merely conceptual addition of the transcendentals can *only* happen in one of two ways, namely, a negation or a relation, because every 'absolute positing' is of something existing in the reality of nature. This is not so much of a problem for the term 'something', which is both a *relational* and a *negative* term, or a negative relation, signifying the division of one thing in relation to another. However, in *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas argues that *res* is predicated of every being 'affirmatively' and 'absolutely', as that by which the being is said to be. This seems to be an instance of an 'absolute positing' of something in the reality of nature, and not a conceptual addition of either a negation or a relation.

The prospect of harmonising these two accounts is complicated even further by *De veritate* 21.3, which examines the conceptual order among the transcendental modes of being, in answer to the question, 'Is good logically prior to the true?' Aquinas begins his response by stating that, because the true and the good have the *ratio* of both being perfections themselves, and also of being perfective in relation to others, their order can be considered from either perspective. Considered from the perspective of the beings perfected, the good is naturally prior to the true for two reasons. First, the perfection of goodness *extends* further than that of truth, in terms of that which is perfected, for it is only those things that have the power of cognition that can be perfected by truth, whereas all things that participate *esse* are perfected by

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<sup>72</sup> *STh* I, q. 6, a. 4.

goodness: all seek the good, but not all know the true.<sup>73</sup> Secondly, those things that are perfected by both the knowledge of the true and the good of existence, are perfected by goodness *before* truth, because knowledge is posterior to existence. Conversely, considered in themselves, the true is logically prior to the good since the true perfects something *secundum rationem speciei*, whereas the good perfects not only in this way, but also *secundum esse*. Therefore, Aquinas immediately draws a very important conclusion:

the character of good includes more notes than that of the true and is constituted by a sort of addition to the character of the true. Thus good presupposes the true, but the true in turn presupposes the one, since the notion of the true is fulfilled by an apprehension on the part of the intellect, and a thing is intelligible in so far as it is one; for whoever does not understand a unit understands nothing, as the Philosopher says.<sup>74</sup>

Aquinas concludes, considered in themselves, the order of these ‘transcendent names’ (*nominum transcendentium*) is as follows: after being comes the one, after the one comes the true; and then after the true comes the good.

As we saw in chapter one, Aquinas argues in his commentary on Lombard’s *Sentences* that the transcendentals have an order based upon how closely they add to being, and that being itself is included in the understanding of the other transcendentals.<sup>75</sup> However, this passage from *De veritate* 21.3 makes it clear that it is not only being, but also all other preceding transcendentals, that are included in the conception of subsequent transcendental names. In other words, each transcendental makes a *cumulative* addition to being and the other transcendentals that conceptually precede it. As such, the good is constituted by addition to being, the one, and the true.

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 1 & 2. This does not negate the ‘co-extension’ of the true and the good, but simply states that there are more things *perfected* by goodness than by truth. Nevertheless, even those things that are not perfected by truth are ‘true’ themselves, insofar as they have being which is conformable to an intellect.

<sup>74</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3. This is a ‘momentous conclusion’, a passage which ‘tells us more than any other in Thomas’s corpus about the nature of the conceptual order among the transcendentals.’ Rubin, “‘Thing’ and ‘Something’ among the Transcendentals,” 405. Cf. *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4.

<sup>75</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3.

Yet, if 'good' includes more than 'true', and is constituted by addition to it, which, in turn, includes more than 'one', and is constituted by addition to that,<sup>76</sup> and if 'one' is the 'closest' (*propinquissimum*) to 'being', since it adds only a negation,<sup>77</sup> then it seems as though 'thing' and 'something' are systematically excluded from this list of transcendental names that cumulatively add to being. Therefore, we must ask, is it possible to find a place for them within this strict logical order? Or does their exclusion from the lists of transcendentals subsequent to *De veritate* 1.1 indicate that they have no systematic place?

As Rubin notes, one approach to resolving this problem is to attempt to reduce 'thing' and 'something' to other terms that are included in Aquinas's lists of the transcendentals.<sup>78</sup> For instance, Andrew Woznicki does this by making a twofold distinction between what he calls 'logical' and 'ontological' transcendental modes.<sup>79</sup> He argues that *res* and *aliquid* fall into the former category, such that they have a distinct logical meaning, but are not 'entitative properties of being'. If this merely logical mode is transposed into the ontological mode, *res* is identical with *ens*, and *aliquid* with *unum*. However, against this view, we must argue that all transcendentals are identical ontologically (*secundum rem*) and distinct logically (*secundum rationem*), so there cannot be two different grades of transcendentals according to this distinction. After all, Aquinas states that the transcendentals are modes of *being*, they express the inner determinations of *ens*, that is, they are not *dialectical* modes. Consequently, the idea of a merely logical category in contradistinction to an ontological category is a violation of his basic understanding of the transcendentals. As Aertsen argues, *De veritate* 1.1 may have a 'noetic horizon', nevertheless, the doctrine of the transcendentals is an 'onto-logy'.<sup>80</sup> In other words, all the

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<sup>76</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3.

<sup>77</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Rubin, "'Thing' and 'Something' among the Transcendentals,' 397-98.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew Woznicki, *Being and Order: The Metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas in Historical Perspective* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990), 113-14.

<sup>80</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 106-7.

transcendental terms have a logical and an ontological aspect. If they can be divided into two groups, then the only options to pursue from within Aquinas's thought are those he mentions himself. In *De veritate* 1.1, this is a division between a being considered *in se* and *in ordine*, and in his other derivations of the transcendentals it is between the addition of either a conceptual 'negation' or 'relation'.

A slightly different approach is taken by Mark D. Jordan, who argues that *res* and *unum* ought to be combined under *unum*, because they are the positive and negative aspects of being in itself, while *aliquid* ought to be subsumed under *bonum* and *verum*, because *aliquid* is the negative aspect of *ens* as related, and is comprised under *bonum* and/or *verum* in a positive mode.<sup>81</sup> Historically, such attempts originate with Francisco Suarez, who argued that *aliquid* can be reduced to *unum*, and *res* to *ens*.<sup>82</sup> Admittedly, Aquinas sometimes defines *unum* as 'that which is undivided in itself and divided from others', which seems to imply that it can ultimately subsume the term *aliquid*.<sup>83</sup> Likewise, he argues that the term 'that which is' (*quod est*) implies both *res* (i.e., *quod*) and *ens* (i.e., *est*), so it might seem reasonable to reduce the former to the latter.<sup>84</sup> However, the problem with Jordan's approach, as with Suarez's before, is that Aquinas clearly states that the terms *ens*, *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, and *bonum* are all distinct from one another logically, and are not synonymous. Consequently, it simply will not do to subsume one term under another. Each expresses a distinct mode of being not articulated by the term *ens* itself, nor, for that matter, by any other transcendental term either.

Nevertheless, the mere omission of a transcendental term from a list that seems to be systematically complete is not necessarily a problem in itself.<sup>85</sup> For example, as

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<sup>81</sup> Mark D. Jordan, 'The Grammar of Esse: Re-reading Thomas on the Transcendentals,' *The Thomist* 44 (1980), 14.

<sup>82</sup> Aertsen, *Transcendental Thought*, 609-10. The opinion of Suarez is shared by, among others, Stanislas Breton, 'L'idée de transcendental,' 45-74, and Winfried Czapiewski, *Das Schöne bei Thomas von Aquin*, 88.

<sup>83</sup> For example, *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 4, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>84</sup> *In I Perih.*, lect. 5 (20).

<sup>85</sup> Rubin, "'Thing" and "Something" among the Transcendentals,' 406-8.

we saw above, the term 'one' has a place of systematic importance in Aquinas's ordering of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 21.3. It is presupposed and included in the definition of the 'true', because a thing is intelligible insofar as it is 'one'. Even so, Aquinas omits this term from a similar list which derives the transcendentals upon the same basis of the conceptions of the human intellect:

A thing is prior logically in so far as it is prior to the intellect. Now the intellect apprehends primarily being [*ens*] itself; secondly, it apprehends that it understands being; and thirdly, it apprehends that it desires being. Hence the idea of being [*ratio entis*] is first, that of truth [*ratio veri*] second, and the idea of good [*ratio boni*] third.<sup>86</sup>

This passage lists the transcendentals in a precise logical order that is similar to *De veritate* 21.3, and yet it does not include 'one', a term that receives its own separate treatment in this same part of the *Summa theologiae*, in which Aquinas repeatedly states that it is convertible with being, because it only adds to it the negation of division.<sup>87</sup> This establishes the principle that seemingly exhaustive lists of the transcendentals do not necessarily preclude the inclusion of other terms, a point of great significance for our study into the transcendental status of the beautiful.

More important than the issue of mere omission is the question concerning whether we can find a place for 'thing' and 'something' within the systematic order that Aquinas elaborates in *De veritate* 21.3. In the first instance, we shall have to find a place for 'thing' in such a way that it also satisfies the condition in *De veritate* 21.1, that any conceptual addition to being must be either a negation or a relation, and not an absolute positing of something existing in reality. The resolution of this question is vital for clarifying the systematic nature and order of the transcendentals in Aquinas's metaphysical thought. Clarity on this issue is a necessary precondition for the question concerning transcendental beauty, because if this is indeed a transcendental, then it must have a distinct and coherent place, where it makes a unique *cumulative*

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<sup>86</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4 ad 2.

<sup>87</sup> Rubin, "'Thing' and 'Something' among the Transcendentals," 407. Cf. *STh* I, q. 11, a. 1.

addition to being within the systematic order of the other transcendentals. In this respect, the present argument depends upon a precise formulation of this order.

Now, as we have already noted, the list of transcendentals or general ‘modes of being’ enumerated in *De veritate* 1.1 – the only list that includes ‘thing’ and ‘something’ – is divided into two categories, namely, those which are consequent upon every being (*ens*) either in itself (*in se*) or in relation to another (*in ordine ad aliud*). This is a division according to the opposition between the ‘one’ and the ‘many’, in contrast to Aquinas’s other derivations, which are divided according to the addition to being of either a conceptual negation or relation. Indeed, his wider treatment of the opposition between the ‘one’ and the ‘many’ is the context within which Aquinas repeatedly outlines his account of the order of origination in the human intellect of the *prima*.<sup>88</sup> This is a subject of self-evident importance for a consideration of the systematic order of the transcendentals, as they unfold the primal fullness of being, the first conception of the intellect. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will interpret this account with the help of a key passage from Aquinas’s commentary on Boethius’s *De Trinitate*. This will demonstrate that it is not only possible, but also necessary, to include ‘thing’ and ‘something’ within the systematic order of the transcendentals, and that we can do so in such a way that both terms fulfil the condition in *De veritate* 21.1, that a merely conceptual addition to being can only be either a negation or a relation.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 219-221.

<sup>89</sup> Rubin, ‘“Thing” and “Something” among the Transcendentals,’ 399. I am greatly indebted to Rubin’s work in my argument in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ONE AND THE MANY: A KEY FRAMEWORK

In the previous chapter we examined Aquinas's derivation of specific transcendentals, and highlighted the fact that the coherence of his various treatments of this subject depends upon the discovery of a systematic framework within which to integrate all the *general* modes of being into one cumulative order. The identification of this order is a necessary precursor to asking the question concerning the transcendental status and place of the beautiful, not least because our approach will be to argue that when Aquinas's ordering of the transcendentals is clarified, the beautiful has an implicit place within that framework. Therefore, in this chapter, we will present Aquinas's treatment of the one and the many, and especially the account he gives in this context of the genesis of the primary intellectual conceptions in the human mind, as a key to determining the systematic order of the transcendentals.

First, we will we examine Aquinas's understanding of the opposition between the 'one' and the 'many', and particularly the account he gives in this context of the genetic order among the first conceptions in the human intellect. Secondly, I will fully explicate this order by conducting a careful reading of question 4, article 1 of his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*. This will unfold in two stages: (i) we will examine the way in which Aquinas traces the ultimate origins of multiplicity to the constitution of prior and simple things by being and non-being, in order to clarify the way in which the addition to being made by 'thing' (*res*) does indeed satisfy the requirements of *De veritate* 21.1, which we identified in the previous chapter; (ii) we will highlight the crucial distinction Aquinas makes between 'division' and 'diversity', two notions which are fundamental to the *ratio* of 'thing', 'one', and 'something', in order to clarify the systematic order of these three *prima* as the presupposed basis of

the 'relational' transcendentals of the true and the good. Having done so, we will be in a position in the next chapter to introduce the Augustinian triad *mode-species-order* as the framework within which we will present a comprehensive outline of the transcendentals, and the implicit place of the beautiful within their systematic order.

### *The opposition between the one and the many*

Aquinas's main concern in his treatment of the opposition between the 'one' and the 'many' (or 'multitude') is the logical order between these two notions. In *Metaphysics* X, 3, Aristotle had argued that the mode of opposition that pertains to the proper *ratio* of these two terms is that between the 'divisible' and the 'indivisible', for multitude consists in things being divided or divisible, and unity consists in things being undivided or indivisible. Thus, in this opposition of contrary terms, the one is the negative or privative term that is posterior to the many, which Aristotle explains from the fact that the many or divisible is more easily known to the senses than that which is one or indivisible.<sup>1</sup> In his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Aquinas agrees that the composite and divisible is more easily perceived by our senses than that which is simple and indivisible, even though the latter is prior and more intelligible by nature.<sup>2</sup> For instance, we perceive a whole before its parts, the composite before the simple, and so in the temporal order we encounter that which is many before that which is one.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, we define the first principles of things by the negations of posterior things, like when we say that a point is what has no parts, or that God, who we know

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<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysics* X, 3 1054a 20-30. Cf. *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1983-85). In the Neo-platonic tradition, the negative character of the one in relation to the many is expressed by Plotinus's association of the 'One' with the god, Apollo, whose name is glossed as *a-polla*, that is, 'the non-multiple'. For this tradition, unity is the negation of multitude. See *Enneads* V, 5.6.

<sup>2</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1989-91).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15: 'quod secundum philosophum, multitudo est prior uno secundum sensum, sicut totum partibus et compositum simplici; sed unum est prius multitudine naturaliter et secundum rationem.'

by way of negations, is incorporeal, immutable, and infinite. Likewise, we define and name the one, the indivisible, from our temporally prior knowledge of the many, the divisible, as the privation of division, even though the former is conceptually prior and more intelligible by nature than the latter. In other words, the many is prior in the *ordo cognoscendi*, as that from which we *name* the meaning of the one, but the one is prior in the *ordo essendi*.

However, Aristotle not only argued that multitude is temporally prior to the one in terms of our sensory perception, but that it is logically prior too, which raises a problem for Aquinas.<sup>4</sup> Since the *ratio* of unity is included in that of multitude – for the latter is defined as nothing other than an ‘aggregate of unities’ (*aggregatio unitatum*) – if unity is conceptually posterior to multitude, as Aristotle argued, then there will be a circularity of definition between these two terms. In other words, the many would only be comprehensible by a prior and essentially more intelligible notion, namely, the one, which, in turn, would be simultaneously derivative and posterior in a conceptual sense to the notion of the many, which is absurd. Aquinas argues that this is inadmissible, because it would mean that the same thing (i.e., the ‘one’) is known both to a greater and to a lesser degree than another term (i.e., the ‘many’), which is impossible.<sup>5</sup>

By way of solution, he introduces an important distinction between the notions of ‘division’ and ‘multitude’.<sup>6</sup> Nothing prevents something from being logically prior and posterior according to diverse considerations, he argues, and there are two things that we can consider in a multitude, namely, what multitude is, and division itself. According to the consideration of division itself, division is prior to unity *secundum*

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<sup>4</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1995).

<sup>5</sup> Avicenna was also aware of this difficulty in showing the proper quiddity of the one, because, as that which is not divided, it seems to presuppose the concept of multitude, and yet, it is posited in the definition of the many, which is the ‘aggregation of unities’. See *Metaph.*, III, 3 (ed. Van Riet, pp. 114-15). Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 219-20.

<sup>6</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1996). ‘Thomas’s solution to this problem represents a major innovation. He introduces a distinction between the notions of “division” and “multitude.” These are not identical, because the latter concept contains more than the former.’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 220.

*rationem*, for the one is that which is undivided. Aristotle may have argued that multitude is prior to unity as the divided to the undivided, but Aquinas argues that this is only true in a *semantic* sense. Because the senses perceive the composite and divisible before the simple and indivisible, unity is named from multitude as the *undivided* according to the *ordo cognoscendi*.<sup>7</sup> However, according to the consideration of what a multitude is, one is prior, since a multitude is an *aggregatio unitatum*. In other words, according to that which is prior and more intelligible by nature, the one is prior to the many in the *ordo essendi*, because ‘divided’ things do not have the formal *ratio* of ‘multitude’, until after the idea of being ‘one’ and undivided is attributed to each of them.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the *ratio* of the one is not circular, because it is said privatively as a negation of division (since it is undivided being), and not of multitude, and so, division is prior to unity *secundum rationem*, but multitude is posterior.<sup>9</sup>

However, this raises a question that is fundamental to our present concern: if ‘one’ is a negation of ‘division’, and not of ‘multitude’, then what is the division of which it is a negation? In his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Aquinas immediately rules out a particular kind of division by making an important distinction between two different conceptions of unity, namely, the ‘one’ which is the ‘principle of number’ (*principium numeri*), and the ‘one’ which is ‘convertible with being’ (*convertitur cum*

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15: ‘Nam privatio est posterior secundum rationem, cum in intellectu privationis sit eius oppositum, per quod definitur: *nisi forte hoc referatur solum ad nominis rationem*, prout hoc nomen unum significat privative, nomen vero multitudinis positive; nomina enim imponuntur a nobis secundum quod cognoscimus res.’

<sup>8</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1998). Cf. *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 3 (566); *STh I*, q. 11, a. 2 ad. 4; *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3 ad 2. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 220.

<sup>9</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15: ‘unum autem dicitur privative respectu divisionis, cum sit ens indivisum, non autem respectu multitudinis. Unde divisio est prior, secundum rationem, quam unum; sed multitudo posterius.’ *STh I*, q. 30, a. 3 ad 3. In *STh I*, q. 11, a. 2, Aquinas argues that the ‘one’ which is convertible with being is opposed to ‘multitude’ by way of privation, as the undivided is to the thing divided. However, as he explains in his reply to the first objection, in the *ordo essendi*, it is multitude that is a certain privation upon unity. For, no privation entirely takes away the being of a thing, since it is ‘negation in the subject’, and so the removal of unity is founded in some one thing, such that multitude is some one thing, as evil is some good thing, and non-being is some kind of being. This does not involve the predication of one opposite of another, it is rather a relation between the absolute and the relative, for what is ‘one’ *simpliciter* is ‘many’ *secundum quid*, and vice versa, in the same way as what is relatively good is absolutely bad, or vice versa. Cf. *STh I*, q. 11, a. 1 ad 2; *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1993-94).

ente).<sup>10</sup> As he puts it in the *Summa theologiae*, this is a distinction between a *mathematical* and a *metaphysical* conception of unity.<sup>11</sup> Now, the division that is negated by the *metaphysical* idea of unity, which is convertible with being, is not the division of ‘continuous quantity’, for this is the kind of division that is presupposed to the *mathematical* idea of unity, the principle of number.<sup>12</sup> Continuous quantity, or extension, was one of two kinds of quantity distinguished by Aristotle, the other being ‘discrete quantity’, or number. Because the former is divisible into countable parts, it gives rise to the latter, which is a multitude constituted by the number of undivided parts. Thus, ‘one’ is not the first number, but the ‘principle of number’, because it is the negation of quantitative division, and from this essential characteristic results its mathematical *ratio*, namely, ‘measure’ (*mensura*).<sup>13</sup> For example, the number ‘3’ is a multitude composed of three undivided parts, that is, three unities. Therefore, in contrast to the *metaphysical* one, the *mathematical* one adds something real to the

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<sup>10</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1997).

<sup>11</sup> *STh I*, q. 11, a. 3 ad 2. In *STh I*, q. 11, a. 1 ad 1, on the one hand, Aquinas accuses Pythagoras and Plato of conflating these two conceptions of unity, and concluding that, since transcendental unity signifies the substance of ‘being’ as undivided, and because number is composed of unities, therefore, numbers are the substances of all things. Aristotle’s critique of this position is that it leads to the monism of Parmenides, because if ‘being’ and ‘one’ are a separate, subsisting substance, then nothing can exist beyond it, for there is nothing extraneous to being other than non-being. See *Metaphysics III*, 4 1001a 29-b 1. Cf. *In I Physic.*, lect. 6 (36). Of course, for Aquinas, there exists a separate One, who is not common to all by predication, as the substance of all things that are one, but is common to all by causality, as the principle of the unity of things. See *In III Metaph.*, lect. 12 (501); *In X Metaph.*, lect. 3 (1964). Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 209-12. On the other hand, Aquinas also accuses Avicenna of conflating these two conceptions of unity, and concluding that, since the *principium numeri* adds a reality to the substance of ‘being’ – otherwise number would not be a species of quantity – therefore, transcendental unity must likewise add a reality, as accidents add to substance. However, this kind of accidental addition of unity to being leads to an infinite regress, for if each thing is not one by its substance, but by a superadded accident, then this, in turn, must be one by another, and so on *ad infinitum*. See *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3. Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 212-18.

<sup>12</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1997).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *STh I*, q. 11, a. 2: ‘Nam unum quod est principium numeri, opponitur multitudini quae est numerus, ut mensura mensurato, unum enim habet rationem primae mensurae, et numerus est multitudo mensurata per unum, ut patet ex X Metaphys.’ See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 216-18. It is highly significant for our present argument that the *metaphysical* one is also connected with ‘measure’ or ‘mode’ in the Augustinian triad *measure-number-weight* (e.g., *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 obj. 2: ‘Sed ratio entis consistit in specie, unius vero ratio consistit in modo’), but this is a metaphysical notion that is found in all the categories.

substance of which it is predicated, namely, the accidental being of measure.<sup>14</sup> Mathematical unity falls under the genus of 'quantity', where it functions as measure in relation to the negation of quantitative division, whereas metaphysical unity is convertible with being, and so it runs through all of the categories and extends to all modes of being, including those in the genus of quantity.<sup>15</sup>

Aquinas argues in his commentary on *Metaphysics* X that, if the mathematical one is a negation of quantitative division, by contrast, the metaphysical one is a negation of the division which is caused by contradiction, insofar as 'this being' and 'that being' are said to be divided from the fact that 'this' is *not* 'that'.<sup>16</sup> The precise meaning of this statement is critical for our present argument, but Aquinas does not elaborate this point any further at this stage of his commentary. Instead, he concludes by briefly outlining the genesis of the 'first conceptions' (*prima*) in the human intellect, in accordance with his preceding discussion of the opposition between the one and the many. This account is vitally important for our analysis of the systematic order of the transcendentals. He explains: what first falls into our intellect is (1) the idea of 'being' (*ens*), then (2) 'division' (*divisio*), and after this (3) 'one' (*unum*), which is a privation of division; and finally (4) 'many' (*multitudo*), which is constituted of unities, for divided things only constitute a multitude if each of them is 'one'.<sup>17</sup> In this way, just as the *mathematical* one is the principle of number, as the measure by which each number is a multitude or 'discrete quantity' composed of countable and undivided parts, likewise, the *metaphysical* one is the principle of multitude, as the measure by which divided things are constituted as an 'aggregate of unities'.

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<sup>14</sup> *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 2 (560): 'Unum vero quod est principium numeri addit supra substantiam, rationem mensurae, quae est propria passio quantitates, et primo invenitur in unitate.'

<sup>15</sup> 'The numerical one is a categorial specification of the transcendental one.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 218. Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3; *In X Metaph.*, lect. 3 (1981); *In V Metaph.*, lect. 8 (875): 'Haec autem ratio mensurae consequitur rationem indivisionis (...) Et ideo unum non omnino aequivoce dicitur de eo quod convertitur cum ente, et de eo quod est principium numeri; sed secundum prius et posterius.'

<sup>16</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1997). Cf. *STh* I, q. 11, a. 2, a. 4: 'quod hoc ens non est illud ens, et sic secundo apprehendimus divisionem'.

<sup>17</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1998). Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3 ad 2; *STh* I, q. 11, a. 2 ad 4.

In *De potentia*, Aquinas provides a more extensive outline of the genetic order of the primary intellectual conceptions, which unfolds in five stages.<sup>18</sup> What first falls into the intellect is (1) 'being', then (2) the 'negation of being' (*negatio entis*), and from these two follows (3) the understanding of 'division', since from the fact that we understand *this* being, and that it is not *that* being, the division from what it is not follows in the intellect. The next thing to enter the intellect is (4) the idea of 'one', as this being is understood to be not divided in itself, and finally, there follows the understanding of (5) 'multitude', as this being is understood as divided from another, and both of them are understood as one in themselves, for no matter how much some things are understood as *divided*, they will not be understood as a *multitude* unless each of the divided things is understood to be *one*.<sup>19</sup>

In all of the passages where Aquinas outlines this order of origination, his intention in doing so is to demonstrate that 'one' is conceptually prior to 'multitude', and not derivative upon it. However, the transition from (2) 'negation' to (3) 'division' raises a question for Aertsen, who thinks that it seems to presuppose a 'moment of alterity' that cannot be accounted for simply by the negation of being.<sup>20</sup> Appealing to question 4, article 1 of Aquinas's commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate* – particularly the argument that *this* being is divided from *that* being by including within itself the negation of that being – Aertsen argues that division does not result simply from an affirmation (i.e., being) and a negation (i.e., non-being), but also a relation of one being to another (i.e., a multitude).<sup>21</sup> He recalls Aquinas's formulation of *aliquid* in *De veritate* 1.1, which signifies the division of one being from another, and argues that the transition in question is made comprehensible only if *aliquid* is incorporated into the account, as the transcendental expression of the division between one being and

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<sup>18</sup> See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 221.

<sup>19</sup> *De pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15. Cf. *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 3 (566); Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 219-223.

<sup>20</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 221.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 222. Exegetically, this is simply wrong, for Aquinas explicitly states that division falls into the intellect immediately from the negation of being. For example, *STh* I, q. 11, a. 2 ad 4: 'divisio cadit in intellectu ex ipsa negatione entis'.

another.<sup>22</sup> In other words, Aertsen is essentially arguing that division is only comprehensible upon a presupposed conception of multitude.

However, as Rubin argues, this argument makes *aliquid*, or ‘multitude’, conceptually prior to *unum*, in which case the latter would be a negation of the former, which flatly contradicts Aquinas’s position in his treatment of the opposition between the one and the many, and the account of the genesis of the primary conceptions which arises from that treatment.<sup>23</sup> For, as Aertsen himself states, *aliquid* expresses the division of a being from other things, and belongs to the notion of ‘multitude’, which expresses, in turn, ‘that one thing is not another thing, that it is divided from the other’.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, by arguing that *aliquid* is necessary for the transition from (2) ‘negation’ to (3) ‘division’, he has wrought havoc upon Aquinas’s explicitly stated order of the primary conceptions, because his position necessitates that (5) ‘multitude’ must come before (4) ‘one’, which reverses Aquinas’s argument concerning the conceptual order of the one and the many.<sup>25</sup> As Rubin argues, Aertsen has misinterpreted the meaning of division in the key text from Aquinas’s commentary on Boethius’s *De Trinitate* to which he appeals. Yet, if properly interpreted, this text illuminates the proper meaning of the genetic order of the primary intellectual conceptions – especially the meaning of ‘division’, of which ‘one’ is a negation, as opposed to ‘multitude’ – which, in turn, provides the systematic key to the cumulative order of the transcendentals, *res*, *unum*, and *aliquid*, as the presupposed basis of the relational transcendentals.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 223. Aertsen also argues that the transcendental *res* must be incorporated into the second stage in the account of the primary conceptions, namely, ‘negation’. He argues, ‘thing’ expresses the quiddity or essence of a thing, by which it enjoys a determinate mode of being, and every determination involves a negation, and so only as *res* can an *ens* be formally divided from others. Indeed, whilst we will argue against Aertsen’s proposal in relation to *aliquid*, we will develop his point in relation to *res* in this chapter, and argue that *res* is a relative negation, insofar as it signifies the essence by which a particular being has a determinate essence that receives and limits being to a finite act of existence, thereby dividing it from what it is *not*.

<sup>23</sup> Rubin, ‘“Thing” and “Something” among the Transcendentals’, 408-414.

<sup>24</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 223-24.

<sup>25</sup> Rubin, ‘“Thing” and “Something” among the Transcendentals’, 412.

*The meaning of the primary intellectual conceptions*

In question 4, article 1 of his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*, Aquinas is seeking an ultimate explanation for the plurality or multitude of beings. Boethius had asserted that the principle of 'plurality' (*pluralitatis*) is 'otherness' (*alteritas*), and Aquinas immediately interprets the latter in terms of division.<sup>26</sup> He appeals to Aristotle's statement in *Metaphysics*, X, which we have just discussed, that something is called many or plural from the fact that it is divisible or actually divided, and so, everything that is the cause of division must ultimately be considered the cause of plurality or multitude.<sup>27</sup> In other words, if the cause of multitude or plurality is otherness or division, then we must find the ultimate explanation or cause of division.<sup>28</sup>

Aquinas's argument in this article is particularly dense, so it might be helpful to present an initial *précis* of its three fundamental stages: (1) the cause of plurality among posterior and composite things is the plurality of prior and simple things; (2) prior and simple things are divided *in virtue of themselves*, according as they are constituted variously by the opposition of being and non-being; (3) strictly speaking, 'division' is between *a* being and *its* negation (i.e., non-being), and so it is presupposed to plurality or multitude – both the plurality of prior and simple things, and the plurality of posterior and composite things – whereas 'diversity' is the negation between one being and another – *this* being is not *that* being, and vice versa – and so it presupposes the notion of plurality or multitude.

On the one hand, the first and second stages illuminate the way in which *res* fulfils the requirement of *De veritate* 21.1, that any conceptual addition to being must

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<sup>26</sup> In *Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1. Boethius does not make this statement in *De Trinitate*, but in *The Consolation of Philosophy*, found in *The Theological Tractates with an English Translation*, trans. H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand, and S.J. Tester, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), c. 1, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, X, 3 (1054a23).

<sup>28</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 222-23; Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 178-83.

be either a negation or a relation. On the other hand, the third stage illuminates Aquinas's account of the genesis of the intellect's primary conceptions, and in such a way that it clarifies the systematic order of the transcendentals, 'thing', 'one' and 'something'. We will take these two issues in order.

(i) *Being and non-being*

In the first stage of his argument, Aquinas argues that the cause of division in posterior and composite things must be different from the cause of division in primary and simple things, because the 'quasi-formal' cause by reason of which composite things are divided is the diversity of simple and prior things.<sup>29</sup> For example, in the division of quantity, one part of a line is divided from another because each has a diverse position. In other words, position is the *quasi formalis differentia* of continuous quantity. Similarly, in the division of substances, one species is divided from another because they have diverse constitutive differences. For instance, a human being and a donkey have diverse constitutive differences because the rational and the irrational are not one but many. Accordingly, in the order of both accidents and substances, the diversity by which posterior and composite things are divided by prior and simple things, presupposes a plurality of those prior and simple things. However, it cannot *always* be said that the plurality of one thing is caused by some diversity in yet more prior and simpler things, otherwise we would have to go on to infinity. Therefore, the plurality and division of prior and simple things must be assigned to a cause in a different way.

Secondly, then, Aquinas argues that prior and simple things are divided *in virtue of themselves*, and not by something yet more prior and simple. This is so because each includes within itself the negation of the others:

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<sup>29</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1.

it is impossible that being (*ens*) be divided from being insofar as it is being, for nothing is divided from being except non-being. Hence this particular being is only divided from that particular being because *in this being is included* the negation of that being.<sup>30</sup>

In other words, if the division of *posterior* and *composite* beings is consequent upon a plurality of prior and simple things, then the division of *prior* and *simple* things must arise because one includes in itself the negation of the others, that is, it must include non-being within itself in some way, for one posterior and composite being (*ens*) cannot be divided from another insofar as they are both beings, for only non-being is divided from being. Aquinas gives two examples to illustrate this point.

One is taken from first principles in the logical order. Negative propositions are contained in 'primary terms' (*primis terminis*), he argues, because the negation of one is included in the understanding of the other. Aquinas does not explain this example, but we can do so from the principle of contradiction (i.e., the impossibility of simultaneously affirming and negating). We might say that the term 'being' implicitly includes the negation 'not non-being': first we understand 'being', then we understand 'non-being' simply by negating 'being', and by comparing the two we immediately see that 'being' is *not* 'non-being', which is the foundation of the principle of contradiction.<sup>31</sup> Aquinas returns to the ontological order in the second example, which is taken from a consideration of divine causality. The first creature constitutes a plurality with its cause, he argues, inasmuch as the effect does *not* attain to the fullness of its cause. Furthermore, a plurality of primary effects, that is, a multitude proceeding *immediately* from a first cause – as opposed to only one effect proceeding immediately from the first cause, and a second effect proceeding *mediately* from the first cause *through* the first effect – imitate their common cause in different ways, or in the same

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<sup>30</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1: 'Non potest autem hoc esse, quod ens dividatur ab ente in quantum est ens; nihil autem dividitur ab ente nisi non ens. Unde et ab hoc ente non dividitur hoc ens nisi per hoc quod in hoc ente includitur negatio illius entis.' Maurer's translation modified. My emphasis. Wippel argues that this statement uses language that is reminiscent of Parmenides. However, unlike Parmenides, 'Thomas is willing to admit that in some way nonbeing is.' *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 178.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2; *ScG* II, 83. See Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 179.

way but according to different degrees of remotion, such that the negations of both the first cause and all other primary effects are present in each effect. In other words, non-being is present in these effects insofar as they are *not* identical with the first cause nor with one another.<sup>32</sup> We will return to this important example in a moment.

Aquinas concludes from these two examples that it is evident that the first or fundamental principle of plurality or division arises from affirmation and negation; that is, in order to account for the ultimate origins of plurality, we must first understand being and non-being, and from these two are constituted the primary divided beings, and hence their plurality.<sup>33</sup> Just as we immediately arrive at the conception of 'one' (*unum*) from a consideration of being insofar as it is undivided from itself, likewise, after the division of being and non-being we immediately arrive at the conception of the plurality of prior and simple things.<sup>34</sup> In other words, prior and simple things are many or plural by virtue of themselves according to the different ways in which they are composed of a division between being and non-being. However, before we examine the third stage of Aquinas's argument, we should ask *how* primary and simple beings can be constituted from a certain division of being and non-being. In other words, how do these prior and simple things contain non-being? And what is the status of these beings? These questions directly bear upon the problem of how 'thing' (*res*) can satisfy the requirement of *De veritate* 21.1, that any conceptual addition to 'being' (*ens*) must be either a negation or a relation.

The second example given above is particularly instructive in relation to these questions. Aquinas repeatedly addresses the issue of whether a multitude can immediately originate from a single first cause, particularly in order to refute the view of Avicenna, who argued that from the 'First Being' only the 'First Intelligence' proceeds immediately, and that the diversity of the universe is created from the

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<sup>32</sup> Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 180-1.

<sup>33</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. 'Those first things which are divided from one another are constituted of [...] being and nonbeing. It is because of this that they themselves form a plurality or a many.' Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 181.

different ways in which the latter is related to the former.<sup>35</sup> By contrast, Aquinas argues that the distinction and multitude of things originates solely from the intention of God, who brings things into being so that his goodness may be communicated to creatures.<sup>36</sup> Because the divine goodness, which is simple and uniform in itself, cannot be sufficiently represented by one creature, God has produced many and diverse creatures by his divine wisdom, so that what is missing to one in the representation of divine goodness may be supplied by another, with the totality of the universe more perfectly representing him than any single creature could.<sup>37</sup> As Aquinas argues in Book I of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, God, who is his own being, is universally perfect because the nobility of no genus is lacking to him.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, the nobility of any given creature is according to the mode by which that thing (*res*) has the act of being (*esse*), for a thing is more or less noble insofar as its being is contracted to some special mode of greater or lesser nobility.<sup>39</sup> For example, we can make a generic distinction between those things which merely exist, those that exist and have life, and those which exist, have life, and also have intellectual knowledge. That which merely exists has being in a far more contracted and limited mode, whereas that which not only exists and lives, but also has intellectual knowledge, enjoys a far more expansive participation in being. Therefore, because God is his own being, and has being according to the ‘whole power of being itself’ (*totam virtutem ipsius esse*), he cannot be lacking in any nobility.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, just as every nobility and perfection is found in a thing according as that thing *is*, so every defect is found in it according as it is *not*. Because God has

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<sup>35</sup> ScG I, 42 (11); *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 16; *STh* I, q. 47, a. 1; *De substantiis separatis*, c. 10. Cf. Avicenna, *Metaph.*, IX, 4 (ed. Van Riet, 1: 479.94-480.11 & 481.45-484.8). See Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 179-81.

<sup>36</sup> *STh* I, q. 47, a. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* Of course, there is one perfect image of God, namely, the uncreated and eternal Word, the divine wisdom who fully and perfectly possesses the nature of the Father as his only-begotten Son, whom all creatures imitate imperfectly.

<sup>38</sup> ScG I, 28 (1).

<sup>39</sup> ScG I, 28 (2).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

being *totaliter*, non-being is totally absent from him, for a thing is removed from non-being according to the mode in which it has being, and so all non-being and defect is absent from God, which means that he is universally perfect.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, non-being or defect is present in creatures insofar as they fail to represent the divine goodness and perfection, that is, insofar as they are *not*. In other words, a creature fails to be removed from non-being insofar as its 'mode of being' falls short of the 'whole power of being itself'. As Aquinas also puts it: 'the more closely a creature approaches God, the more it possesses of the act of existence; the further it is from Him, the more it possesses of non-existence.'<sup>42</sup> Thus, non-being is present in a creature as the negation of its act of being, that is, as expressing the fact that there is always something of the whole power of being that is lacking to a finite being, which participates in *esse* according to a certain limited and contracted mode.

Of course, the metaphysical principle through which a finite being has a limited and determined share of *esse* is its essence or quiddity.<sup>43</sup> As Aquinas explains in an important passage in *De potentia*, divine being is distinguished and individuated from every other being because it is self-subsisting being (*esse per se subsistens*), and not something additional to a distinct nature, whereas every other being is individuated by a nature and substance in which their being subsists, so that among such beings, the being of *this* is different from the being of *that*, by virtue of the fact that it is the being of a different nature.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, all creatures fall short of the divine simplicity, even intellectual substances which are not composed of form and matter, inasmuch as they are characterised by this basic ontological composition of existence (*esse*), and essence, or what is (*quod est*).<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the being (*esse*) of creatures cannot be diversified insofar as it is *esse*, but only by something that is *praeter esse*, that is, by something in addition to being, such that, the being of a stone is other than the

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<sup>41</sup> ScG I, 28 (3). Cf. *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2.

<sup>42</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 3 ad 16.

<sup>43</sup> See Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 94-131.

<sup>44</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2 ad 5. Cf. ScG I, 26 (3); *STh* I, q. 3, a. 4.

<sup>45</sup> ScG II, 52 (1). Cf. *STh* I, q. 3, a. 7 ad 1.

being of a human being, for instance.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, every creature is distinct from others according to its essence.<sup>47</sup>

Now, as Wippel argues, the essence of a finite being is a form of 'relative non-being'.<sup>48</sup> For example, in chapter 8 of *De substantiis separatis*, Aquinas argues that whatever participates 'to be' (*esse*) must in itself be a non-being, and only participate *esse* according to a particular and determinate 'mode of being', which belongs to the genus or species of that thing, so that each is adapted to one determinate mode of being by the form through which it belongs to a certain species.<sup>49</sup> The 'to be' of a thing is not its form or essence, but something that comes to the thing through its form which participates in 'to be', and so, Aquinas concludes: 'If, therefore, when I say 'non-being', the effect is to remove only the 'to be' in act, the form, considered in itself, is non-being but sharing in 'to be'.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, he argues in *De potentia* that 'what has its being from another is nothing considered in itself, if it be distinct from the being that it receives from another.'<sup>51</sup> Thus, in 'that which is' (*quod est*), namely, creatures, it is possible to consider something other than their being, which is nothing in itself. As Wippel argues, it is the creature's essence that receives its act of existence, so 'this principle, the creature's essence, may be described as nonbeing because it is not the creature's act of being.'<sup>52</sup> A creature's essence is not non-being *simpliciter*, but only *secundum quid*, that is, in a relative sense: 'the essence is the principle of relative nonbeing within every finite being which is required to account for the fact that its *esse*

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<sup>46</sup> ScG II, 52 (2).

<sup>47</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 4, a. 1 ad 2: 'unumquodque autem creatum per essentiam suam distinguatur ab aliis'.

<sup>48</sup> Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 186-190.

<sup>49</sup> *De substantiis separatis*, cap. 8 (43).

<sup>50</sup> *De substantiis separatis*, cap. 8 (44).

<sup>51</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 13 ad 4.

<sup>52</sup> Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 188. Cf. 'In other words, since the essence is distinct from the act of being, and since nothing can differ from being except nonbeing, the essence is in fact a kind of nonbeing.' Rubin, "'Thing" and "Something" among the Transcendentals', 429

and therefore its total being is different from that of any other entity.<sup>53</sup> As Aquinas characterises the matter, a creature's essence or substance is not non-being in an absolute sense, but a kind of potentiality that *receives* the act of being in the thing that has existence.<sup>54</sup>

All of this demonstrates that 'thing' (*res*), which refers to the quiddity or essence of a being, does indeed fulfil the condition of *De veritate* 21.1, namely, that any conceptual addition to being must either be a negation or a relation, for it is a qualified or relative negation. We might say that a creature's essence is the *receptive space* of its act of being (*esse*), a determination that allows for a certain *measure* or *mode* of being to be received, which necessarily involves the negation of anything that exceeds that measure.<sup>55</sup> In this sense, the essence of a creature is constituted by being and non-being insofar as it is a determination or reception of a certain measure of being and *not* the full power of being. As such, the creature's essence is the metaphysical principle by which non-being is present in any determinate being as negation.<sup>56</sup> As Aquinas makes clear in his commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, the essence or form of a creature is not a complete being in itself, that is, it is not one of the posterior and composite beings described in his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*.<sup>57</sup> Rather, it is something that does not have existence in itself, but is a prior and simple thing that falls short of the divine simplicity insofar as it only ever exists in composition with a

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 189. Cf. 'the essence is not *absolute* nonbeing but rather *relative* nonbeing, since it is what remains after negating only the being's act of existence, rather than the being in its entirety'. Rubin, *op. cit.*, 430.

<sup>54</sup> *De substantiis separatis*, cap. 8 (42): 'Ipsum igitur esse per se subsistens est unum tantum. Impossibile est igitur quod praeter ipsum sit aliquid subsistens quod sit esse tantum. Omne autem quod est, esse habet. Est igitur in quocumque, praeter primum, et ipsum esse, tanquam actus; et substantia rei habens esse, tanquam potentia receptiva huius actus quod est esse.'

<sup>55</sup> 'Every being is a "thing," for it has through its essence or quiddity a stable and determinate mode of being. Every determination includes a negation.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 223.

<sup>56</sup> Rubin, "'Thing'" and "'Something'" among the Transcendentals', 431. This determination does not compromise the transcendentalism of the term 'thing' (*res*) itself. Specific essences determine and limit being to something that is not the fullness of being, which is mutually exclusive of others, but the notion of essence, signified by the term *res*, is generic and applies to any being of any kind, and so it is consequent upon every being.

<sup>57</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 5, a. 1.

particular act of being. The multiplicity and division of such prior and simple things arises because there is a varying opposition between being and non-being in each of them. To return to the example given in Aquinas's commentary, the prior and simple constitutive differences of 'human' and 'donkey' are diverse because the essence 'human' implicitly includes the negation '*not* donkey', as the essence 'donkey' includes the negation '*not* human'. We might say, each essence is open to receive a particular frequency on the spectrum of *ens commune*, which means that it is unreceptive to all other frequencies that can be plotted on that spectrum. In this way, in the mode of non-being, '*not* donkey' is present in the essence 'human', and '*not* human' is present in the essence 'donkey'. Accordingly, *res* is that by which the 'division' between a being and all that it is *not* occurs.

We now turn to the distinction Aquinas makes in his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate* between this notion of 'division' and that of 'diversity'. In clarifying this issue, we will also elucidate the *ratio* of the 'one' (*unum*) and 'something' (*aliquid*), which, as we will see, conceptually presuppose the *ratio* of 'thing' (*res*) in the systematic order of the transcendentals.

### (ii) *Division, unity, and diversity*

In the third and final stage of question 4, article 1 of his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*, Aquinas makes a crucial technical distinction between the kind of negation that is involved in the simple essence or *res* of a finite being, and the negation involved between one complete and composite being and another. He explains, insofar as the power of its cause remains within the plurality of prior and simple things – namely, the opposition of being and non-being – the *ratio* of 'diversity' is consequent upon that plurality, for one among many is said to be 'diverse' in comparison to another because it is *not* that other. In the same way that secondary causes cannot produce their effect without the power of their first cause, the plurality of prior and simple things cannot

explain the plurality of posterior and composite things unless the power of the prime opposition between being and non-being remains within them. To return again to the example given before, one species is divided from another because the two have diverse constitutive differences, as in the case of a human being and a donkey, since the rational and the irrational are *not* one but many, and therefore this human being and this donkey are *not* one, but many. Thus, the diversity of prior and simple things produces the diversity of posterior and composite things.

In this sense, Aquinas argues, Boethius is right that 'otherness' (or 'division') is the principle or cause of 'plurality' (or 'diversity'), because 'otherness' pertains between those in whom there are diverse constitutive differences, as in the case of a human being and a donkey. However, he also makes an important technical distinction between the negation involved in the notions of 'diversity' and 'division':

although division precedes the plurality of prior items, diversity does not, because division does not require that both of the items divided one from another be a being [*ens*], since division is present through affirmation and negation. Diversity, however, does require that both items be a being [*ens*], and so it presupposes plurality.<sup>58</sup>

Put simply, 'diversity' presupposes 'plurality' (or 'multitude'), which, in turn, presupposes 'division', and not vice versa (i.e., division does not presuppose a multitude or plurality). This apparently trivial distinction is crucial to our present argument.<sup>59</sup> We shall take these two notions in order, first, division, secondly, diversity.

First, according to the order of origination of the *prima* in the human intellect, the 'division' of being (*ens*) and non-being precedes the plurality of prior and simple beings, because it is simply *between* the affirmation of *a* being and *its* negation. For example, all that is required for the idea of 'division' is one being, for example, 'a

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<sup>58</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1. Cf. John F. Wippel, 'Thomas Aquinas on the Distinction and Derivation of the Many from the One: A Dialectic between Being and Non-Being,' *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (1985), 570.

<sup>59</sup> Rubin, "'Thing' and 'Something' among the Transcendentals', 421.

human being', whose essence, 'humanity', contains the negation, 'not donkey', for instance, as it also contains the negation of all that falls under 'not humanity'. Moreover, the being that we call 'this human being' is *divided* from everything that falls under 'not this human being'. However, the former is a being, whereas the latter is merely a negation, a mode of non-being that only 'exists' as a 'being of reason'.<sup>60</sup> As Aquinas puts it, 'nothing is divided from being except non-being',<sup>61</sup> and so, as Rubin argues, 'division arises primarily and essentially between being and *nonbeing*.'<sup>62</sup>

Admittedly, Aquinas argues that we apprehend the nature of 'division' according to the formulation 'this being is not that being', which might seem to imply that division is between members of a multitude, and not between being and non-being.<sup>63</sup> This is Aertsen's view. However, Aquinas also argues that prior and simple items are divided in virtue of themselves: since nothing is divided from being except non-being, *this particular being is only divided from that particular being because in this being is included the negation of that being*.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, as Rubin argues, 'the division of one being from another logically presupposes the more basic division between a being and its negation.'<sup>65</sup> Accordingly, the division between 'this being' and 'that being' is entirely *in* the former. The division does not necessitate the actual existence of the latter. It arises entirely from the fact that the negation of the latter is included *in* the former. In other words, division results simply from 'contradiction', which is the opposition between being and non-being.<sup>66</sup> Strictly speaking, it results from the opposition between the affirmation of what this being is, and the negation of what it is *not*, which is a finite determination according to the essence or *res* of that being.

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<sup>60</sup> Rubin, "'Thing' and 'Something' among the Transcendentals', 416. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 5 ad 2; *STh I*, q. 16, a. 3 ad 2.

<sup>61</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Rubin, "'Thing' and 'Something' among the Transcendentals', 416.

<sup>63</sup> *STh I*, q. 11, a. 2 ad 4: 'Ita quod primo cadit in intellectu ens; secundo, quod hoc ens non est illud ens, et sic secundo apprehendimus divisionem'. Cf. *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1997); *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3 ad 2; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15.

<sup>64</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Rubin, "'Thing' and 'Something' among the Transcendentals', 417.

<sup>66</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1997).

Thus, all that is required for the notion of division is this being, and not the plurality of this being and that being, which means that 'division' is logically prior to 'plurality' or 'multitude', both of prior and simple things, and also of posterior and composite things; it follows immediately upon the opposition of non-being to being, since it is 'present through affirmation and negation'.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly, 'diversity' *does* presuppose a plurality or multitude, because it is between two or more beings. Therefore, Aquinas qualifies his answer to the main question under consideration in question 4, article 1 of his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*, by arguing that 'diversity can in no way be the cause of the plurality of primary items, unless by diversity is meant division.'<sup>68</sup> Consequently, Boethius's statement, that otherness (which Aquinas interprets as 'division') is the cause of plurality, can only apply to the plurality of composite beings, whose plurality or diversity is caused by the otherness or division of first and simple things.<sup>69</sup> Yet, he does not explain why the *ratio* of 'diversity' presupposes a plurality of beings. In order to explain this point, we must return to Aquinas's commentary on *Metaphysics*, X and Aristotle's statement that the 'same' and the 'diverse' can be said only of those things of which 'being' and 'one' are predicated, but not of non-beings.<sup>70</sup>

The terms 'same' and 'diverse' are contraries, Aquinas explains, the former arising from the nature of 'one', and the latter from the nature of 'many', since those things which are one in substance are said to be the 'same', whereas those things whose substance is not one, but plural, are said to be 'diverse'.<sup>71</sup> Now, 'substance' is said of two things, namely, the *suppositum* itself, and also the nature or species of a thing, and so there are three ways in which things can be one in substance, or the 'same'.<sup>72</sup> First, in terms of the *suppositum* alone, whereby things are the same

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<sup>67</sup> *STh* I, q. 11, a. 2 ad 4; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15; *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 3.

<sup>68</sup> *In Boeth. De trin.*, q. 4, a. 1.

<sup>69</sup> See Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 183.

<sup>70</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (2015). Cf. Rubin, "'Thing' and 'Something' among the Transcendentals", 417-19.

<sup>71</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1999-2000).

<sup>72</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (2002-2005).

'numerically'. For example, the *suppositum* is numerically the same in reference to 'white' and 'man', when we say that Socrates is a man and that he himself is white. Secondly, in terms of only the nature or species of the *suppositum*, whereby things are the same 'specifically' or 'generically'. For example, Socrates and Plato are the same in terms of their specific nature, namely, 'humanity', and both are the same as a cat in terms of their generic nature, namely, 'animality', but none are the same in terms of *suppositum*, and so they are all numerically diverse. Thirdly, and finally, in terms of both the *suppositum* and also the nature or species in which it subsists, whereby Socrates is the same as Socrates, both 'numerically' and 'materially', inasmuch as matter, which is the principle of individuation, is taken for the supposit, and also 'specifically', because the species is taken for the nature of the supposit.

Crucially, the notions of the 'same' and the 'diverse' are not opposed as contradictory terms.<sup>73</sup> For example, Socrates and Plato are the *same* 'specifically' in terms of their common human nature, but they are 'numerically' *diverse* because they both have different supposits by which they are each materially individuated. In other words, the numerical 'diversity' of Plato to Socrates is not signified by '*not* Socrates', that is, not by contradiction, but by 'Plato', who is a being that is numerically and materially the same as himself in terms of *suppositum*, and specifically the same as himself in terms of the nature of his own supposit. As we saw in the case of 'division', '*not* Socrates' can signify non-being in the division of Socrates from everything that he is not, because this contradiction arises from negation, namely, the opposition of non-being to being. Therefore, 'not the same' is opposed to 'same' in a contradictory way, that is, as a negation, and so it can be predicated of non-being.<sup>74</sup> By contrast, 'diversity' does not pertain to the division of non-being from being, but only to that between

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<sup>73</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (2015).

<sup>74</sup> Thus, two negations, such as, 'not Socrates' and 'not Plato', for example, are neither the 'same' nor 'diverse' because each is an 'indefinite notion' that is true of non-being and all beings other than the one they negate, i.e., Socrates or Plato, and so these negations have no unity in themselves, which is the basis for sameness and diversity. See Rubin, "'Thing" and "Something" among the Transcendentals', 418.

beings. Consequently, Aquinas argues that ‘everything that is a being and is one in itself, when compared with something else, is either one with it, and then it is the same, or it is capable of being one with it but is not, and then it is diverse.’<sup>75</sup> For Plato is only capable of being ‘specifically’ the same as Socrates if, first, both men are ‘numerically’ diverse in terms of their *suppositum*, that is, if each is a being and one in substance with themselves, for ‘diversity is a natural consequence of plurality of substance.’<sup>76</sup> Therefore, a being’s ‘diversity’ means that it is both one in itself and divided from something else, which means that it presupposes the idea of ‘multitude’, which is defined as an *aggregatio unitatum*, namely, a plurality of divided or diverse beings which are one in themselves.<sup>77</sup>

Therefore, as Aquinas states in his various accounts of the genesis of the first conceptions in the human intellect, what we first conceive is (1) ‘being’ (*ens*), that is, a being, then (2) the negation of being, or ‘non-being’ – either *simpliciter*, according to an absolute denial of being, or *secundum quid*, according to the principle of contradiction, or the relative possession of non-being in a particular being, such that it includes the negation of what it is not – and, therefore, from the notion of a being and its negation follows the idea of (3) ‘division’. In absolute terms, being is only divided from non-being, which, in turn, is neither form nor matter. In relative terms, a being is divided by the relative opposition of being and non-being, which is determined by its essence, by which a being contains the negations of what it is not. Therefore, the idea of ‘division’ precedes that of a plurality of prior and simple things, that is, a multiplicity of essences, as it also precedes the plurality or multiplicity of posterior and complex beings. Moreover, just as the idea of division follows upon that

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<sup>75</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (2015): ‘Omne enim quod est ens et unum in se, comparatum alteri, aut est unum ei, et sic est idem; aut non unum, aptum natum esse unum, et sic est diversum.’

<sup>76</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (2016).

<sup>77</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1996). Divided things do not constitute a multitude unless each of the divided things is one. Therefore, Cardinal Mercier argues that a being and its negation are divided things which constitute, not a multitude, strictly speaking, but an ‘indefinite plurality’. See D. Mercier, *A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., trans. T.L. Parker and S.A. Parker, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1932), 448. Cf. Rubin, ‘“Thing” and “Something” among the Transcendentals’, 419.

of being and non-being, insofar as a being includes in itself the negation of what it is not through its essence, likewise, the idea of (4) 'one' also directly follows upon that of 'division', insofar as a being includes the affirmation of what it is, and not the negation of what it is, such that it is not divided from itself by being and non-being in the way that it is divided from that which it is not.<sup>78</sup> In other words, the undividedness or unity of a being means that it does not include its own negation, it is not 'formally divided' against itself, such that in its own being it fulfils the law of contradiction of not simultaneously affirming and negating itself.<sup>79</sup> Once the intellect attains to the idea of 'one' it can then attain to that of (5) 'multitude', insofar as it attributes to the diverse members of a multitude the idea of being one and undivided in themselves.

Having now clarified the meaning of each term enumerated in Aquinas's account concerning the genetic order of the *prima* in the human intellect, we are now in a position to outline the way in which this account illuminates the systematic order of the transcendentals.

### *The genesis of the primary conceptions and the order of the transcendentals*

The first conception that falls into the human intellect is 'being' (*ens*), which expresses the idea of *actuality*, or 'that which is'. This first conception does not refer to an abstract notion of existence, but to a concretely subsisting being, that is, *ens* signifies *a* being. Absolutely and simply speaking, it is conceptually prior because everything is knowable insofar as it is in act, and so being is a primordial fullness that enters into the conception of everything else that the intellect apprehends. The transcendental or

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<sup>78</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2: 'Primum enim quod cadit in apprehensione intellectus, est ens et non ens: et ista sufficiunt ad definitionem unius, secundum quod intelligimus unum esse ens, in quo non est distinctio per ens et non ens.'

<sup>79</sup> *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 3, 566: 'Sed unum quod cum ente convertitur importat privationem divisionis formalis quae fit per opposita, cuius prima radix est oppositio affirmationis et negationis. Nam illa dividuntur adinvicem, quae ita se habent, quod hoc non est illud.'

'general' modes of being are pre-contained in the idea of being in a united and indistinct manner, as in their principle, and so the human intellect has a 'natural' knowledge of these modes of being, but only insofar as they conceptually unfold the primal fullness of being in a particular order. In this sense, *ens* is not so much the first transcendental, but the original fullness of all the transcendentals, which are not yet explicitly expressed by the term 'being' itself.<sup>80</sup> After all, Aquinas describes the transcendentals as general modes of being. Similarly, in our analysis of the relations among the transcendentals in the previous chapter, we noted that, whereas all the transcendentals are 'convertible' *secundum rem*, so that every good is true, and every true is good, or every being is good, and every good is being, nevertheless, when we consider the transcendentals *secundum rationem*, this notion of convertibility is opposed to the idea of the 'non-reciprocal inclusion' of being in the understanding of all the transcendentals. In other words, there is a fundamental non-reciprocity between being and the transcendentals, for being is the only *prima* that is contained in the understanding of all the others, and uniquely, it is apprehended simply by itself *per se*, and without the conception of any other transcendental predicate.

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<sup>80</sup> There is a remote analogy here with the natural knowledge we have of the divine essence in contrast to the super-natural revelation of the divine persons. That is, by reason alone, the divine essence is known from God's effects by the human intellect (in an extremely apophatic or negative manner), but through the unfolding of revelation by supernatural grace, the processions of the persons within the one divine essence are made known to us. The divine essence is not prior to the divine persons ontologically speaking, but we might say that it is temporally prior in the *ordo cognoscendi*. After all, Aquinas describes the knowledge that we have of God's existence through his effects, and other similar truths, as the 'pre-ambles' to the articles of faith, the natural knowledge that is 'presupposed' by faith, just as grace presupposes nature (see *STh* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1). Just as the notion of being enters into our understanding of all the transcendentals that are unfolded from it, our cognitively presupposed notion of the divine essence enters into our understanding of each of the divine persons, who simply are one in the simplicity of the divine essence. According to natural reason, we have an initial conception of the divine essence, but by the unfolding of grace, we become aware of the primal fullness of the divine essence in the register of Trinitarian theology. Of course, this is only a remote analogy, and it breaks down in the sense that, whereas the transcendentals are only conceptually distinct, the divine persons are distinguished by real relations. Furthermore, the divine persons are not united in an indistinct manner in the divine essence as in their principle, each simply is the fullness of the divine essence, which is mysteriously one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, Aquinas indicates this analogy himself: 'in God four predicates—being, the one, the true, and the good—are appropriated as follows: being, to the essence; the one, to the Father; the true, to the Son; and the good, to the Holy Spirit.' (*De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1, s.c. 5.)

Next, by negating 'being', the human intellect attains to its second notion, namely, 'non-being'. This is not a transcendental mode of being, but simply the notion of being's contradiction or negation. Nothing is divided from being except non-being, which is neither matter nor form, and so it cannot be added to being as an accident is added to a subject, or a difference to a genus, that is, nothing can be added to being extrinsically as if it were outside the essence of *ens universale*. In other words, non-being is not *something* that exists.

Therefore, from this primordial difference follows the mind's third notion, namely, 'division'. Absolutely speaking (*simpliciter*), non-being is the negation of a being in its entirety, and so the primordial sense of division is that which pertains between being and non-being. The absolute negation of *a* being would be its non-existence. However, in a relative sense (*secundum quid*), the essence or quiddity that belongs to a being is a kind of non-being or negation, insofar as it is distinct from its 'act of being', and so it is therefore nothing in itself. Moreover, the essence includes the negation of all that the being is *not*, and so it is an internal principle of relative non-being. Accordingly, the essence is the principle in every being that receives and determines its act of being, and thereby distinguishes it from other beings. This aspect is expressed by the first 'general' of transcendental mode of being, namely, 'thing' (*res*), which expresses the idea of *quiddity* or *identity*, or 'that which is', or 'that which is divided', in the sense of being determinate and distinguished from all that it is not. Therefore, *res* adds to *ens* the idea of an essence by which a being is determined as a particular kind of being, and is not another kind of being, and so from this form of relative negation follows the idea of a being's *division* from other kinds of being. This is also why the notion of *res* is contained in the complex notion of being as 'that which is' (*quod est*), for *ens* refers to a concretely subsisting being, and created beings subsist insofar as their existence is received in a determinate essence.

Upon the notion of division follows the intellect's fourth notion, namely, the 'one' (*unum*), which is a negation that expresses the idea that a being is not formally divided against itself, or 'that which is undivided in itself'. This is the second 'general'

or transcendental mode of being. If *res* expresses the *essential* division of a being from others, by containing within itself the negation of all that it is not, then *unum* expresses the *existential* integrity of a being such that it does not include its own negation.<sup>81</sup> In the case of the being 'A', it would be a contradiction to simultaneously make the affirmation that 'A is A' and the negation that 'A is not A'. Thus, if *res* expresses the formal division of a being from what it is not (e.g., 'A is not B'), *unum* negates the idea of this kind of formal division effecting an internal distinction within the being itself. Consequently, *unum* adds directly to *res*, as the negation of such division *within* a being.

Aquinas will also describe the unity of a being in terms of the undividedness of its parts in relation to the whole.<sup>82</sup> At the most fundamental level, the unity of every being is composed by the relation of wholeness between its essence and existence, whereby the former is not formally divided against the latter, but is a receptive space in which everything that is formally opposed to the fruition of its determinate existence is negated: 'everything guards its unity as it guards its being.'<sup>83</sup> We noted above that the *mathematical* one has the *ratio* of measure in the genus of 'quantity'. Likewise, the *metaphysical* one also has the *ratio* of measure or mode in a transcendental and ontological sense.<sup>84</sup> This metaphysical *ratio* signifies the measure by which *esse* is received in a specific essence according to a mode that is fitting to that form.<sup>85</sup> As such, the 'one' expresses the *commensuration* or *harmony* between existence and essence in a particular being, the formal fittingness of the two, such that they are not discordant or dissonant in relation to one another.<sup>86</sup> We might describe this as the

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<sup>81</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1: 'nihil aliud enim est unum quam ens indivisum.'

<sup>82</sup> *STh I*, q. 11, a. 1.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 obj. 2: 'ratio entis consistit in specie, unius vero ratio consistit in modo'.

<sup>85</sup> *De substantiis separatis*, cap. 8 (42-43).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 5: 'ubicumque est aliquid receptum, oportet ibi esse modum, cum receptum limitetur secundum recipiens; et ideo, cum esse creaturae et accidentale et essenziale sit receptum, modus non solum invenitur in accidentalibus, sed etiam in substantialibus.'

formal *integrity* of a being in itself.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, by expressing the ‘undividedness’ of a being, ‘one’ is not a ‘pure privation’, for it does not signify *indivision itself*, but *the being itself which is undivided*.<sup>88</sup> As such, ‘one’ does not signify a negation alone, but being in a certain respect, and so the true definition of unity is ‘being that is undivided’.<sup>89</sup> Whereas the one itself might not signify the idea of perfection, but only of indivision,<sup>90</sup> nevertheless, ultimately it refers to the being itself which is undivided in its relation of fittingness to the essence in which it is received. In other words, the one (*unum*) does not refer to a perfection other than existence (*ens*) or essence (*res*), but it does refer to the harmony or commensuration between these two perfections.

Next, there follows the intellect’s fifth notion, namely, ‘multitude’, which expresses the idea of a division between things which are ‘one’ in themselves. This notion is transcendental, in the sense that it transcends all the categories, but it is not a distinct transcendental itself.<sup>91</sup> As Aquinas argues, being is divided by the one and the many in the sense that what is one *simpliciter* is many *secundum quid*: what are many in parts are one in the whole; what are many in accidents are one in subject; what are many in number are one in species; what are many in species are one in genus; what are many in processions are one in principle.<sup>92</sup> As such, ‘multitude’ itself would not be contained under ‘being’ if it were not contained in some way under

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<sup>87</sup> This conception will be fundamental to our attempt to articulate the *ratio* of the beautiful as the mode of being by which the soul relates to the intrinsic harmony and unity of another being.

<sup>88</sup> *In X Metaph.*, lect. 4 (1988): ‘unum non significat privationem puram, non enim significat ipsam indivisionem, sed ipsum ens indivisum’. Aquinas makes a distinction between ‘simple negation’, by which one thing is said absolutely not to be present in something else, and ‘negation in a genus’, that is, privation, by which something is denied of something else, not absolutely, but within the limits of some determinate genus. He argues that, because the negation included in the concept of ‘unity’ is a negation in a subject, it differs from simple negation and has more of a resemblance to the nature of privation, or negation in a genus. See *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 3 (565).

<sup>89</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3 ad 3: ‘haec est vera definitio unius: unum est ens quod non dividitur’. Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7: ‘Unum vero quod convertitur cum ente, non addit supra ens nisi negationem divisionis, non quod significet ipsam indivisionem tantum, sed substantiam eius cum ipsa: est enim unum idem quod ens indivisum.’

<sup>90</sup> *STh* I, q. 6, a. 3 ad 1.

<sup>91</sup> As Aertsen points out, the term *transcendens* (used in the technical sense) occurs fourteen times in Aquinas work, and interestingly, seven of these instances concern the term *multitudo*. See *The Transcendentals*, 91.

<sup>92</sup> *STh* I, q. 11, a. 1 ad 2.

'unity'.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, multitude is the privation or removal of unity in some one thing, in the same way as non-being is a privation in some being, and evil is a privation in some good, so that what is being, good, or one *simpliciter*, respectively, is non-being, evil, or many *secundum quid*, and vice versa.<sup>94</sup> In other words, the transcendental of multitude is derivative upon and enclosed within the transcendental of unity, the former merely being a privation of the latter. As non-being and evil are not transcendental modes of being, neither is multitude, but all three can be found in all of the categories, as privations upon the being, goodness, and unity of things.

Nevertheless, the notion of multitude is presupposed by the third general mode of being, namely, 'something' (*aliquid*), which expresses the idea of 'that which is divided from other unities', or 'that which is diverse'. Indeed, as Rubin argues, once 'diversity' is distinguished from 'division', its similarity with the notion of 'something' (*aliquid*) comes into focus: like diversity, and unlike division, *aliquid* presupposes a multitude of beings, for it is a relational transcendental that expresses the division of one being from another, rather than the division between being and non-being signified by *res*; and it also implies the existence of other beings in its signification of 'another thing' (*aliud quid*).<sup>95</sup> Thus, the division expressed by *aliquid* is not 'division' *per se*, that is, not the division that arises from contradiction, which is the opposition between being and non-being, but instead 'diversity', that is, the division between beings which are one in themselves. Strictly speaking, members of a multitude are not 'divided', but are 'diverse', and this diversity is expressed by 'something' (*aliquid*) insofar as it signifies the sense of 'another *quid*'. As such, *aliquid* adds directly to *unum* the idea that a being that is one in itself is diverse from other beings in a multitude which are one in themselves.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> *STh* I, q. 11, a. 2 ad 1.

<sup>95</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. Rubin, "'Thing" and "Something" among the Transcendentals', 419-21.

<sup>96</sup> In terms of human understanding, this is true even of divine being, which we understand to be distinct or 'removed' from created being. For instance, as we saw above, Aquinas argues that such a multitude exists between the first cause and the effects that proceed immediately from it.

At this point we have reached the end of Aquinas’s account of the genetic order of the primary intellectual conceptions, and the results of our analysis can be represented as follows:

| 1   | 2                                    | 3   |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| ‘thing’ ( <i>res</i> )                        | ‘one’ ( <i>unum</i> )                | ‘something’ ( <i>aliquid</i> )              |
| <i>that</i> which is<br>(divided from others) | that which is<br>undivided in itself | that which is<br>diverse from other unities |

This is precisely the same order as the one outlined in the first stage of Aquinas’s account in *De veritate* 1.1. The transcendentals of *res*, *unum*, and *aliquid* demarcate the essential preconditions within the framework of the ‘one’ and the ‘many’ upon which basis the soul enjoys its transcendental encounter with others: *res* signifies the essence or quiddity by which a being is distinct and divided from all other beings according to its own determinate and formal identity; *unum* signifies the being or existence of a thing insofar as it is intrinsically commensurate with, and proportionate to, the essence in which it is received, and according to which the two principles of being and essence are harmoniously united in a whole that possesses integrity; *aliquid* signifies the fact that every being composed of the two preceding aspects is always in relation to other beings which are similarly composed, as members of a multitude that are extrinsically diverse from, and ordered to, one another. Furthermore, as our discussion above has demonstrated, divided things only belong to a multitude, they are only *some-other-thing* in relation to one another, if they are both ‘being’ and ‘one’ in themselves, whereas the division between a being and its negation, which is transcendently expressed by *res*, is not a division between two beings. As such, the terms *unum* and *aliquid* express two different ways in which the being or existence of a thing can be considered: first, intrinsically, in terms of its unity and wholeness;

secondly, extrinsically, in terms of its diversity and otherness.<sup>97</sup> This is in contrast to the essence of a being, which is signified singularly by the predicate *res*. In the next chapter, we will introduce a further framework that takes up these three constitutive elements of every being, as the presupposed basis upon which the soul relates to being under the rubric of the 'relational' transcendentals. Moreover, this framework suggests that there is an implicit place for the beautiful within the systematic order of the transcendentals.

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<sup>97</sup> This distinction will be crucial to our differentiation between the beautiful and the good.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE AUGUSTINIAN TRIAD *SPECIES-MODE-ORDER* AND THE IMPLICIT TRANSCENDENTAL

In the previous chapter we clarified the systematic order pertaining to the first stage of Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 1.1, namely, *res, unum, aliquid*, by means of the framework of the one and the many. In this chapter, I will introduce another framework, namely, the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*, or *number-measure-weight*, which embraces these three transcendentals as the presupposed basis upon which Aquinas articulates the cumulative order of the relational transcendentals of the true and the good. Moreover, it is also the framework by which Aquinas makes a crucial distinction between the beautiful and the good in a remarkably important passage in *De veritate* 22.<sup>1</sup> First, we will give a detailed analysis of Aquinas's presentation of the *ratio* of the good, especially insofar as this is articulated by means of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*. Secondly, we will demonstrate the way in which this triad provides a framework that embraces the full systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, and also indicates the implicit place of the beautiful within that order. By the end of this chapter, we will have established the distinct place of the beautiful that is implicit in Aquinas's conception of the order of the transcendentals. This will bring our analysis in the first part of our study to a conclusion, so that our task in the second part will be one of demonstrating that the systematic order we have proposed is corroborated by Aquinas's discussion of the beautiful itself.

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<sup>1</sup> See *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1, ad 12.

*The ratio of the good: desire and perfection*

As we have seen from our analysis thus far, Aquinas argues in *De veritate* 1.1 that the good expresses a 'general' or *transcendental* mode of being that is consequent upon every being, as opposed to the expression of a 'special' or *categorial* mode of being that diversifies being into different grades of existence. More specifically, the good expresses a relation of 'agreement' between every being and the appetitive power of the human soul, for the soul is naturally apt to agree with every being, such that it is in a certain manner all things, and so, as Aristotle argued, the good is 'what all desire' (*quod omnia appetunt*).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in *De veritate* 21.1, Aquinas argues that the good cannot add anything extrinsic to being, because there is nothing outside of the essence of *ens universale*, and that it cannot add to being in the way that the ten categories do, that is, by contracting and determining being to some *special* mode or genus, since, like being, the good is equally found in all genera. Therefore, the good adds to being something that is merely conceptual, namely, the notion of a conceptual and non-reciprocal relation, by which one being is perfective of another, not only according to its *specific* or *rational* character (i.e., its form or essence), as in the order of the true, but also according to the *existence* that it has in the reality of nature. For, the good is in things (*in rebus*), and so, insofar as one being, by reason of its existence, is perfective and consummative of another being, it stands towards that which it perfects as an end. Aquinas concludes, then, all who rightly define the good place in its *ratio* something that pertains to the nature of the end, and so, as Aristotle states in his *Ethics*, the best definition of the good is 'what all desire' (*quod omnia appetunt*).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 4: 'quod cum dicitur: omnia bonum appetunt, non oportet bonum determinari ad hoc vel illud: sed in communitate accipi, quia unumquodque appetit bonum naturaliter sibi conveniens. Si tamen ad aliquod unum bonum determinetur, hoc unum erit esse.' *STh* I, q. 6, a. 2 ad 2: 'cum dicitur bonum est quod omnia appetunt, non sic intelligitur quasi unumquodque bonum ab omnibus appetatur, sed quia quidquid appetitur, rationem boni habet.' See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 304.

Now, as Aquinas explains at the beginning of his commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics*, this definition does not specify the intrinsic essence or nature of the good, instead, it is a definition *per posteriora*, that is, it specifies the nature of the good from its proper effect.<sup>4</sup> He observes, because the good is convertible with being it is one of the *prima*, and so it cannot be understood by anything prior, but only by something posterior, as causes are understood through their proper effects, for the *prima* are the first conceptions of the human intellect. In other words, Aristotle and Aquinas are not arguing that something is good because it is desired, but rather that something is desired because it is intrinsically good. Accordingly, the relation to appetite does not *constitute* the essence of the good, but is necessarily *consequent* upon it.<sup>5</sup> As such, the effect, namely, the relation to appetite, manifests the nature of the cause, namely, the good.

Furthermore, Aquinas argues that there are certain acts of the will and appetite which regard the good under some special condition, as 'joy' (*gaudium*) and 'pleasure' (*delectatio*) regard the good as present and possessed, whereas 'desire' (*desiderium*) and 'hope' (*spes*) regard the good as not yet possessed.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, love (*amor*) is the first act of the will and appetite, the root and origin presupposed by all other appetitive movements, which regards the good universally (*in communi*), whether possessed or not,<sup>7</sup> and so, Aquinas describes love as 'complacency in good' (*complacentia boni*), and the principle of the movement of appetite towards its end.<sup>8</sup> Despite this variety of appetitive acts, there is a particularly close association between the good and the

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<sup>4</sup> *In I Ethic.*, lect. 1 (9).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6: 'ratio boni respectum implicat non quia ipsum nomen boni significet ipsum respectum solum sed quia significant id ad quod sequitur respectus cum respect ipso.' In other words, the good does not merely signify a relation to an appetite, but also the substantial reality which causes that relation.

<sup>6</sup> *STh* I, q. 20, a. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1. Even those things devoid of knowledge have a natural love and appetite by which they tend toward a natural good that is fitting to their nature, because they are so directed by the knowledge of God, the author of nature. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1. We will further explore this theme in the final chapter.

appetitive movement of desire. Indeed, Aquinas argues that the appetitive part (*appetitivam partem*) is named from desire (*appetendo*), which is a seeking (*appetat*) for that which is not yet possessed.<sup>9</sup> As he explains in his differentiation of the appetitive and apprehensive powers:

the act of the apprehensive power is not so properly called a movement as the act of the appetite: since the operation of the apprehensive power is completed in the very fact that the thing apprehended is in the one that apprehends: while the operation of the appetitive power is completed in the fact that he who desires is borne towards [*inclinatur*] the thing desirable. Therefore the operation of the apprehensive power is likened to rest: whereas the operation of the appetitive power is rather likened to movement.<sup>10</sup>

As such, the good is particularly associated with the appetitive movement of desire toward that which is not yet possessed: 'goodness properly relates to the appetite (goodness being what all things desire); and therefore it has the aspect of an end (the appetite being a kind of movement towards a thing).'<sup>11</sup> By contrast, *love* is described as the *principium* of this movement,<sup>12</sup> and pleasure is described as the cessation of this movement as it comes to rest in the good attained.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, the good names the desirability of being insofar as, by its form and existence, a being stands towards another being as an end that can perfect and complete that other.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, we might say that the notion of the good is characterised by the logic of possession. It names being insofar as it is considered under the rubric of that which perfects and completes another in the mode of an end, for in this way it is desirable.

However, if the *ratio* of the good is defined *per posteriora* as 'what all desire', Aquinas will sometimes distinguish this from the *nature* of the good, that is, its

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<sup>9</sup> *STh* I, q. 19, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>10</sup> *STh* I, q. 81, a. 1. This distinction in terms of movement and rest will be crucial for our discussion of the correlation between love and the beautiful in chapter seven.

<sup>11</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1.

<sup>12</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1: 'amor dicitur illud quod est principium motus tendentis in finem amatum.'

<sup>13</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 31, a. 1 ad 2: 'delectatio sit quies quaedam appetitus'.

<sup>14</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1.

intrinsic essence, which he defines in terms of ‘act’ and ‘perfection’.<sup>15</sup> This is unsurprising, since the good is convertible with being, which, in turn, is defined as the *act* of all actualities, and therefore the *perfection* of all perfections.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Aquinas argues that ‘a thing is perfect in proportion to its state of actuality’,<sup>17</sup> for the excellence or nobility in anything belongs to it according to its being, since a person would have no nobility as a result of their wisdom, for instance, unless through it they were *actually* wise.<sup>18</sup> In other words, to be merely in potency to wisdom is not to be actually perfect in this regard. Therefore, *esse* is ‘the most perfect of all things, for it is compared to all things as that by which they are made actual; for nothing has actuality except so far as it exists.’<sup>19</sup> As such, the word ‘perfect’ signifies whatever is not lacking in actuality.<sup>20</sup> This is reflected in the origins of the word *perfectum*, and its signification of that which has been completely made (*factum*):

everything that comes to be is brought forth from potency to act and from non-being to being when it has been made [*factum*]. That is why it is rightly said to be perfect [*perfectum*], as being completely made, at that moment when the potency is wholly reduced to act, so that it retains no non-being but has a completed being.<sup>21</sup>

As such, God is called ‘perfect’, not because he is the result of some process of becoming, but by a certain ‘extension’ of the name, in the sense that he is complete in act.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, God is called ‘universally perfect’ because he lacks not the excellence

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<sup>15</sup> ScG I, 37 (5): ‘Quod quidem patet et ex ipsa natura boni, et ex eius ratione. Naturaliter enim bonum uniuscuiusque est actus et perfectio eius... Ratio vero boni est ex hoc quod est appetibile. Quod est finis.’

<sup>16</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2 ad 9.

<sup>17</sup> *STh* I, q. 4, a. 1.

<sup>18</sup> ScG I, 28 (2).

<sup>19</sup> *STh* I, q. 4, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>20</sup> *STh* I, q. 4, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>21</sup> ScG I, 28 (10). As Oliva Blanchette argues, the prefix *per-* (through), in *per-fectum*, denotes a sense of something having been made ‘through and through’. Joined to *facere*, or *fieri*, it gives the verb *perficere* a sense of thorough accomplishment. *The Perfection of the Universe According to Aquinas: A Teleological Cosmology* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 42-43.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. *STh* I, q. 4, a. 1 ad 1.

belonging to any genus, since he has being *totaliter*, and is entirely removed from non-being.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, it is axiomatic for Aquinas that all created things desire their own perfection, that is, the actualisation of their proper nature and being, which ultimately consists in a likeness to God, the first cause of all things.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, everything is said to be good insofar as it is perfect, for in that way only is it desirable. That is, only insofar as something is actual and perfect is it capable of being an end that is desired in order to perfect and actualise another in the mode of an end.

Most importantly for our present argument, Aquinas argues that a thing is said to be perfect if it lacks nothing according to its 'mode of perfection', and he elaborates this point by employing the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*, or *number-measure-weight*, in order to delineate that in which the *ratio* of the good consists.<sup>25</sup> In the *Summa theologiae*, he argues that the *ratio* of the good consists in this triad insofar as the former consists in the notion of perfection.<sup>26</sup> He begins by observing that everything is called good insofar as it is perfect, for in this way is it desirable, and something is called perfect if it lacks nothing according to the mode of its perfection. Therefore, *since everything is what it is by its form*, he argues, and given that any particular form both presupposes certain things, and also has certain things that are necessarily consequent upon it, in order for something to be perfect, and therefore good, it is necessary that it has (1) a form, (2) those things which are the pre-requisites of that form, and (3) those things which are consequent upon that form. That which is the pre-requisite of a form is the 'determination' or 'commensuration' of its principles, whether material or efficient, which is signified by *mode*, and so it is said that 'measure marks the mode'.

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<sup>23</sup> ScG I, 28 (3). In this sense, the notion of perfection has a *negative* function, insofar as it is a negation of defect or non-being in a thing.

<sup>24</sup> *STh* I, q. 6, a. 1.

<sup>25</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6; *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 4. Aquinas is clear that this division only applies to created goodness. For example, *STh* I, q. 6, a. 1 ad 1: 'habere modum, speciem et ordinem, pertinet ad rationem boni causati. Sed bonum in Deo est sicut in causa, unde ad eum pertinet imponere aliis modum, speciem et ordinem. Unde ista tria sunt in Deo sicut in causa.' Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 4: 'modus, species et ordo consequuntur unumquodque bonum creatum in quantum huiusmodi, et etiam unumquodque ens.'

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

Aquinas does not explain this any further, but the Augustinian note of mode or measure is given greater clarity in his treatment of this subject in *De veritate* 21.6, to which we will turn in a moment. Next, the form itself is signified by *species*, because by its form each thing is constituted in the species to which it belongs, and so it is said that *number* provides the species, because, as Aristotle argues in Book VIII of the *Metaphysics*, definitions signifying species are like numbers, for, just as ‘one’ added or subtracted varies the species of number, so it is in the case of definitions, which vary according to the addition or subtraction of differentia. In his reply to the third objection, Aquinas clarifies that *species* can signify not only the substantial form of a being, that is, the specific difference by which it is contained under a given genus, but also any of the accidental forms that properly belong to that substance:

Every being [*esse*] is due to some form. Hence, according to every being of a thing is its mode, species, order. Thus, a man has a mode, species and order as he is white, virtuous, learned and so on; according to everything predicated of him.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, consequent upon any given form is an inclination to some end or action, or to something of this kind, for everything, insofar as it is in act, acts and tends towards that which is in agreement with its form, and this pertains to *weight* or *order*.<sup>28</sup> In other words, in this instance, the note of *order* expresses the fact that the fullness of a thing’s perfection and goodness consists, at least in part, in that thing acting or operating to achieve the end that is consequent upon, and proper to, its form and nature. In this respect, Aquinas’s treatment of the Augustinian triad in this context emphasises that, from the perspective of that which seeks its own perfection and goodness, *order* signifies the appetitive movement of desire toward the end that is in accordance with the form of the appetitive subject.

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<sup>27</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5 ad 3. Aquinas also argues that, according to the diverse grades of goodness, there are diverse grades of *mode*, *species*, and *order*, which include those that belong to the substances of nature, and also those that belong to the accidents of natural inclination, virtue and grace, and the ordinate act itself. See *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 4. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 5.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 80, a. 1: ‘quamlibet formam sequitur aliqua inclinatio, sicut ignis ex sua forma inclinatur in superiorem locum, et ad hoc quod generet sibi simile.’

Thus, Aquinas concludes that the *ratio boni*, insofar as it consists in perfection, consists in mode, species, and order.<sup>29</sup> As he puts it in his other major treatment in the *Summa theologiae*, this Augustinian triad is consequent upon every created good, and therefore upon every being, because every being and good is considered according to some form, according to which the ‘species’ is taken, and the form of each thing, whatever it may be, whether substantial or accidental, is according to some ‘measure’ or ‘mode’, and finally, from its form each thing has an ‘order’ to another (*ordinatur ad aliud*).<sup>30</sup> Aquinas clarifies that these three notes are said to be ‘good’ and ‘beings’, not as though they subsisted of themselves, but because through them other things are formally constituted as beings and good, in a similar way as ‘whiteness’ is not a being through something else, but that by which something else has accidental being as a white thing.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, we may say that mode, species, and order are good, not in the same way as we say that something subsisting is good – otherwise each note would necessarily require its own mode, species, and order, as that which constitutes it as good, which would result in an infinite regress – but in the way in which the ‘principle’ of goodness is said to be good.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most important aspects of Aquinas’s two major treatments of this Augustinian triad in the *Summa theologiae* is the fact that he emphasises the primacy of form.<sup>33</sup> In the first instance, he argues that everything is what it is by its *form*, which is signified by ‘species’, and ‘mode’ and ‘order’, respectively, are presented as that which is presupposed to, and that which follows upon, a given form of a certain nature.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, he clarifies this by saying that every being is according to some *form*, and so according to the existence of every thing (*res*), that is, according to every

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<sup>29</sup> These three do not follow upon the notion of being *per se*, but only upon the notion of being insofar as it is perfect and good, i.e., they follow upon being *sub ratio boni*. See *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5 ad 1.

<sup>30</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 4.

<sup>31</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5 ad 2.

<sup>32</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 7.

<sup>33</sup> ‘In Thomas’s account of this triad, the notion of “form” is central. A thing is called “good” insofar as it is perfect. The perfection of a thing comes to be realized through its form.’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 355.

<sup>34</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5.

form predicable of a subject, whether substantial or accidental, it has 'species', 'mode', and 'order'.<sup>35</sup> This, he argues, is why evil does not deprive a being of all species, mode, and order, because it is a privation within a subject, and so evil deprives a being only of the species, mode, and order that are consequent upon a special form of some kind, such as the being of sight, for instance.<sup>36</sup> In the second place, he argues that every being and good is considered according to some *form*, from which we derive the note of 'species', and that every form, whether substantial or accidental, is according to some 'measure' or 'mode', that is, measure and mode belong to a certain form, and finally, from some form follows an 'order' to another, that is, again, every form has an order that belongs to it.<sup>37</sup> We will return to this important point in a moment.

Aquinas's other major discussion of this Augustinian triad occurs in *De veritate* 21.6. This passage is more technical in nature, and whereas in the *Summa theologiae* he considers the way in which mode, species, and order specify the goodness of a thing insofar as it does not lack anything belonging to its own mode of perfection, by contrast, in *De veritate* 21.6 he considers the way in which this triad specifies the aspects under which a thing is said to be good insofar as it is perfective of another.<sup>38</sup> We recall, in *De veritate* 21.1 Aquinas enumerates two aspects by which a being can be perfective of another, namely, the rational character of its species (*ipsam rationem speciei*), by which alone the true is perfective, and also the act of being (*ipsum esse*) by which it subsists in that species, and according to which the good is also perfective.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, in *De veritate* 21.3 he employs this twofold aspect to clarify the cumulative order of the true and the good:

If the true and good are considered in themselves, then the true is prior in meaning to good since the true perfects something specifically [*secundum rationem speciei*], whereas good perfects not only

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<sup>35</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5 ad 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 4.

<sup>38</sup> These are two sides of the same coin, insofar as they signify the two terms involved in a relationship of desire, namely, the subject that desires the good that is proper to it, and the object that is itself the good so desired.

<sup>39</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1.

specifically but also according to the existence [*secundum esse*] which the thing has in reality. Thus the character of good includes more notes than that of the true and is constituted by a sort of addition to the character of the true.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, the form of a being perfects another in the order of the true solely according to the rational or intelligible aspect of that form, whereas in the order of the good, a form does not perfect simply because of its rational specificity, by which it is knowable, but also because of the actual existence it has in reality, by which it is desirable. In *De veritate* 21.6 this twofold aspect is set within the context of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*, as Aquinas considers the ontological constitution of the good in its essential character.<sup>41</sup>

His discussion is set within the context of the question concerning the ways in which names can imply relations. This is important because, as Aquinas observes in the first objection, since the *ratio* of the good consists in the notion of an end towards which an appetitive subject tends, it would seem that its essential character does not consist in ‘mode’, ‘species’, and ‘order’, but only in the latter *alone*, for the whole character of an end consists in the notion of order, that is, in a relation that is ordained to a certain end, and so species and measure would seem to be superfluous to the *ratio* of the good.<sup>42</sup> However, as he argues in the main body of the article, the *ratio* of the good implies relation (or ‘order’) not because the name good signifies this aspect alone, but because it signifies both the thing itself from which a certain relation follows, together with that relation itself.<sup>43</sup> More specifically, the relation imported by the name good is the condition of being perfective (*habitus perfectivi*), according to which something natural is perfective of another, not only according to its specific

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<sup>40</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3.

<sup>41</sup> As we will see, this framework suggests that the good is not constituted by direct addition to the true, but by direct addition to the beautiful.

<sup>42</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 obj. 1. Essentially, this is an issue that concerns the *cumulative* addition of the transcendentals to one another. In other words, in terms of the Augustinian triad, ‘order’ is the unique addition that the good makes to being, but the *ratio* of the good does not consist in order alone, because it is constituted by addition to those aspects added to being by the transcendentals preceding it, namely, ‘species’ and ‘mode’.

<sup>43</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6.

character (*rationem speciei*), but also according to the being (*esse*) that this form has in reality (*in rebus*), and in this way the good is an end that perfects those things that move toward it.<sup>44</sup>

Having observed that the good is perfective, not only according to the rational or specific character of a form, as knowledge is in the order of the true, but also according to the existence that this form has in the reality of nature, Aquinas then makes an important clarification in relation to this additional aspect of a creature's existence. This clarification concerns the meaning of the Augustinian note of *measure* or *mode*, which helpfully supplies what is missing in his treatment of this note in the *Summa theologiae*, as we noted above. There are two things by which a creature is perfective of another, namely, its form and its existence. However, since creatures are not their own being (*esse*), they must have *received* existence. Their existence, therefore, is finite and terminated according to the *measure of that in which it is received*. In other words, the existence of a particular being (*ens particulare*) is according to the measure of the form or essence in which that existence is received. This point is strikingly similar to Aquinas's explanation in *De veritate* 1.1 and 21.1 of the way in which the categories of substance and accidents contract and limit being to a determinate and 'special' *mode of being*, which is not the addition of something extraneous to the essence of being, but is a determination founded upon the essence of the thing in the reality of nature, in which being is received. As Aquinas argues in a text that we encountered in the previous chapter:

it must be observed that the beings which share "to be" [*ipsum esse*] from the First Being, do not share in it according to a universal mode of being [*modum essendi*] as it is found in the First Principle; they

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<sup>44</sup> Aquinas has just argued that the true is perfective according to *species* alone (*De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3), and so it might seem that the good truly does not 'add' the relation by which a being is perfective, for this is already expressed in some way by the true. However, as he argues elsewhere, the notion of perfection is not contained in the *ratio* of the true, but is only introduced by the *ratio* of the good. For example, *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4: 'verum respicit ipsum esse simpliciter et immediate, ratio autem boni consequitur esse, secundum quod est aliquo modo perfectum; sic enim appetibile est.' Thus, to describe the true as that aspect of a being by which it is perfective according to its *species*, is to consider the true *sub ratione boni*, which, of course, is the dominant framework for question 21 of *De veritate*.

participate in it in a particular way, according to a certain determinate mode of being which belongs [*convenit*] to this given genus or this given species.<sup>45</sup>

In other words, measure or mode *belongs* to the form of a given genus or species, as that which signifies its particular and determinate reception of, and participation in, the gift of 'to be' from Being Itself; which is to say that we participate in a likeness of Being Itself. As the reply to the fifth objection makes clear, wherever something has been received, there must be a mode, since the received is limited according to the recipient; therefore, since a creature's existence, both accidental and essential, is received, mode is found not only in accidental forms, but also in substantial forms.<sup>46</sup>

In other words, any particular form, whether accidental or substantial, does not enjoy the full, infinite plenitude of universal being, but only a determinate participation of being that is received in a particular form or essence. As such, the Augustinian note of *measure* or *mode* signifies that a particular form has a mode or measure that is *commensurate* with, or proportionately and harmoniously determined to, the act of being that it receives, and by which it is actualised. In this way, 'mode' or 'measure' does not signify being or existence as such, but rather the proportion or commensuration of being or existence with the determinate form in which it is received.

Therefore, Aquinas concludes his discussion in *De veritate* 21.6 by arguing that the final or ultimate Augustinian note, namely, *order*, is the relation that the name good implies, and that the other two, namely, *species* and *mode*, are causes of that relation. In other words, *species* and *mode* signify the thing which itself is good, and from which a certain relation of *order* follows. He explains, *species* pertains to the very specific character (*ipsam rationem speciei*) of a thing, that is, its form, which, according as it is something that has existence (*esse*), receives that existence through some determinate *mode*, since everything that is in some thing is in it through the mode of the recipient.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *De substantiis separatis* cap. 8 (43).

<sup>46</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 5.

<sup>47</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6.

As such, 'every good, being perfective in accordance with both its specific character and its act of being, has mode, species, and order: species in its specific character, mode in its act of being, and order in its status as perfective.'<sup>48</sup> Thus, the *ratio* of the good does not consist in the note of order alone, but in the full triadic structure of species, mode, and order.

As in his two major treatments of this triad in the *Summa theologiae*, we can see from Aquinas's discussion in *De veritate* 21.6 that, again, the notion of form has primacy. For instance, the notion of *species* simply signifies the form or specific character of that which is called good, and Aquinas presents the notion of *mode* or *measure* as signifying the way in which existence is received in that form according to the commensuration or determination of the form's principles as the recipient of existence, such that existence is determined by a particular form to a finite mode of being. As we explained, mode or measure is found wherever something is received, and so there is a measure or mode belonging to accidental forms and substantial forms, because a creature has a received accidental being and substantial being. In other words, the note of 'mode' is consequent upon that of 'species'. Additionally, as Aquinas argues in the main body of the article, these two are the cause of 'order', which follows as a consequence upon them. Similarly, as he explains in the reply to the fourth objection, when Augustine says that all evil is found in the privation of 'species', he does not mean to exclude the notes of 'mode' and 'order', because where there is some species necessarily there is some mode, and order is consequent upon species and mode, and so Augustine only mentions species *because the other two are consequent upon the species itself*.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, Aquinas argues that every being is through some form,<sup>50</sup> and in his reply to the ninth objection he explains that, since good is consequent upon being, and is constituted by species, mode, and order, just as substantial and accidental being are different, so are substantial and accidental form

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 4. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 10.

<sup>50</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 7: 'et omne ens sit per formam.'

different from one another, *and each has its own mode and its own order*.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, there is a certain sequence to the Augustinian notes that constitute the *ratio* of the good: *species* is the first Augustinian note, which signifies a certain form; *mode* is the second Augustinian note, which signifies the measure by which that form is a recipient of existence; and *order* is the third Augustinian note, which signifies the relation by which the form of a good thing is perfective of another according to both its specific character and its existence in reality. We can present this sequence as follows:

| <b>The <i>ratio</i> of the good</b> |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| (1) <i>species</i>                  | (2) <i>mode</i>   | (3) <i>order</i>  |
| form                                | the commensuration of existence with the form in which it is received | the relation that follows upon a form insofar as it is perfective according to both its specific character and its existence in reality |

Now, thus far we have considered this Augustinian triad insofar as it signifies the threefold aspect of the intrinsic *ratio* of the good. However, as we have argued in previous chapters, the transcendentals make a cumulative addition to being, where the posterior includes what is contained in the prior. As such, if the good has the final place in Aquinas's list of the transcendentals, and if it is constituted by the three Augustinian notes of *species*, *mode*, and *order*, then we must ask whether this triad has any connection with the other transcendentals. In other words, is the *ratio* of the good

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<sup>51</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 9.

constituted by the Augustinian triad by the cumulative addition of 'order' to 'species' and 'mode'?

*The Augustinian triad and the cumulative order of the transcendentals*

Indeed, there are striking similarities between the Augustinian triad and the three transcendentals that we discussed in the previous chapter within the framework of the one and the many, namely, 'thing' (*res*), 'one' (*unum*), and 'something' (*aliquid*). In the cumulative and systematic order of the transcendentals, we said that *res* comes first, which signifies the essence of a being, according to which it has the *ratio* of 'that which is divided'. Secondly, comes *unum*, which signifies a negation of formal division within a being, according to which it has the *ratio* of 'that which is undivided in itself'. Thirdly, and finally, comes *aliquid*, which signifies that a being is a member of a multitude of things, which are all beings and one in themselves, according to which it has the *ratio* of 'that which is diverse from others'. These three transcendentals elegantly correspond with the three Augustinian notes, and in the same order as we presented them in the previous section.

First, the Augustinian note of *species* or *number* signifies the form or essence of a being, either an accidental or substantial form, according to which a certain being has a specific rational character, which perfects in the order of the true.<sup>52</sup> This manifestly corresponds with the first transcendental, namely, 'thing' (*res*), which is named from the essence or quiddity of a being, and which also enters into the definition of the true as the 'adequation' or 'conformity' of intellect and thing, since it is that by which a being is knowable.<sup>53</sup> In other words, *species* and *res* refer to the same aspect in a being, namely, its form or essence, whether accidental or substantial, by

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<sup>52</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5; *De Verit.*, q. 21, aa. 1, 3 & 6.

<sup>53</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

which it is a specific determination of being that divides it from what it is not, thus bestowing upon it a distinct identity by which it is knowable within the order of formal causality.

Secondly, the Augustinian note of *mode* or *measure* signifies the fact that any given form is the recipient of existence or being, such that it is not the fullness of *ens universale*, but a determinate and finite mode of being.<sup>54</sup> As such, mode or measure (*mensura*) signifies the *commensuration* or determination of a form or *species* with the act of being that actualises it, in the sense that there is a fitting proportion or harmony between the existence and essence of any being.<sup>55</sup> In other words, existence is received in such a way that *belongs* to the mode or measure of the form as recipient. This characterisation of ‘mode’ or ‘measure’ is highly resonant of our discussion in the previous chapter about the second transcendental, namely, ‘one’ (*unum*), and especially the sense in which, whereas *res* expresses the fact that the essence of a being formally divides it from what it is not, *unum* expresses the fact that its being or existence is not formally divided against itself. That is, a thing is one insofar as it enjoys ‘undivided being’ (*ens indivisum*). Indeed, Aquinas explicitly states that the *ratio* of ‘one’ consists in ‘mode’.<sup>56</sup> We might say, as the *mathematical* one has the *ratio* of ‘measure’ as the principle of number, insofar it signifies an undivided quantitative part, likewise, the *metaphysical* one has the *ratio* of ‘measure’ as the principle of indivision within a being, insofar as it signifies the fact that a thing’s being and essence are not formally or intrinsically divided against one another, but are harmoniously commensurate or proportionate to one another. As we also noted in the previous chapter, ‘one’ does not signify a separate perfection, but neither does it signify a pure privation. Instead, it refers to the two perfections of being and essence, and the harmonious relation between the two. Likewise, ‘mode’ or ‘measure’ does not signify

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<sup>54</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6.

<sup>55</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5.

<sup>56</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6, obj. 2. The connection between *unum* and ‘mode’ is implicitly affirmed in Aquinas’s reply to this objection.

something in addition to being and essence, but rather, the harmonious and commensurate reception of being by a determinate essence.

Thirdly, and finally, the Augustinian note of *order* or *weight* signifies a relation whereby one thing is perfective in relation to another, according to both the rational character of its *species* and also the existence that this form has in reality.<sup>57</sup> In other words, it signifies the way in which one thing stands towards another as an end that perfects. This relation can be considered either from the perspective of the perfective to the perfectible, in which case *order* signifies the relation that follows upon the *species* and *mode* of a good and desirable thing,<sup>58</sup> or from the perspective of the perfectible to the perfective, in which case *order* signifies the inclination or operation towards some end that is in accordance with the form of that which is inclined or operates, whereby it seeks its own perfection and goodness.<sup>59</sup> In either case, this is a relation of one thing to another. This means that the note of *order* corresponds with the third transcendental, namely, *aliquid*, which signifies that a being is a diverse member of a multitude.<sup>60</sup> As we discussed in the previous chapter, things can only be diverse from one another if each of the diverse items is both a being and one in itself. In a similar way, the note of *order* follows upon the notion of *species*, which signifies the form through which a thing has its being, and *mode*, which signifies the unity or oneness of that essence and its existence in a proportion of harmonious commensuration. In other words, *order* can only exist between members of a multitude, that is, between things which are both beings and one in themselves. There can only be a relation of *order* by which one being is perfective of another, according to both the essence and existence

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<sup>57</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *STh I*, q. 5, a. 5.

<sup>60</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6: 'Respectus autem importatus in nomine boni, est habitudo perfectivi, secundum quod *aliquid* natum est perficere non solum secundum rationem speciei, sed etiam secundum esse quod habet in rebus; hoc enim modo finis perficit ea quae sunt ad finem.' *STh I*, q. 5, a. 5: 'Ad formam autem consequitur inclinatio ad finem, aut ad actionem, aut ad *aliquid* huiusmodi, quia unumquodque, in quantum est actu, agit, et tendit in id quod sibi convenit secundum suam formam. Et hoc pertinet ad pondus et ordinem.' *STh I-II*, q. 85, a. 4: 'Ex forma vero sua unumquodque ordinatur ad *aliud*.'

of the former, if both that which perfects, and that which is perfected, are both beings and one in themselves. In this sense, we might say that *order* signifies the being or existence of another thing (*aliquid*) insofar as it is an end that can be perfective of an appetitive subject, whereas *mode* signifies the being or existence of a thing insofar as it pertains to the intrinsic harmony and unity (*unum*) of that thing in itself. Thus, the Augustinian triad is a framework that embraces the cumulative and systematic order of the three transcendentals that we discussed in the previous chapter. This can be represented as follows:

| <b>The Augustinian triad and the first three transcendentals</b> |                          |                                   |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | 2                        | 3                                 |
| <i>species</i>   | <i>mode</i>              | <i>order</i>                      |
| ‘thing’<br>( <i>res</i> )  | ‘one’<br>( <i>unum</i> ) | ‘something’<br>( <i>aliquid</i> ) |

Moreover, we can develop our analysis of the Augustinian triad one step further, by examining the way in which Aquinas explicitly utilises it in order to explain the cumulative order of the relational transcendentals.

Returning to *De veritate* 21.6, we can see that, in the *ratio* of the good, the fullness of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order* represents the completion of the cumulative order of the transcendentals, in which each addition to being presupposes the addition of those transcendentals that precede it. For example, the second objection notes that ‘being’, ‘good’, and ‘one’ are conceptually different, and since the notion of ‘being’

(*entis*) consists in *species*, and that of the ‘one’ (*unum*) in *mode*, the ‘good’ cannot consist in these notes too, the implication being that the ‘good’ must be constituted by the note of *order* alone.<sup>61</sup> However, Aquinas replies that the good does not differ from being and the one by conceptual opposition (*oppositas rationes*), but because it *includes* the *ratio* of being and the one, and *adds* something to them.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, the third objection argues that the note of *species* cannot belong to the *ratio* of the good, since *species* designates a formal cause, which is expressed by the true, in contrast to the good, which expresses the notion of a final cause.<sup>63</sup> However, following Aristotle, Aquinas argues that, just as in numbers the addition or subtraction of ‘one’ varies the species, likewise, in definitions the addition or subtraction of anything constitutes a different species. As such, whereas the essence of the true is constituted from the Augustinian note of *species* alone, because the true is perfective according to *species* alone, by contrast, the essence of the good is constituted by addition from the simultaneity of *species* and the other Augustinian numbers (i.e., *mode* and *order*), because the good is perfective not only according to *species* but also according to the act of existing.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the true is constituted by *species* alone, but the good adds to the true, and so it is constituted by *species*, and also *mode* and *order*.

Finally, as we have already seen, in the reply to the fourth objection Aquinas states the precise logical order of these three notes: order is consequent upon species and mode, and mode and order are consequent upon species.<sup>65</sup> In other words, what

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<sup>61</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6, obj. 2. It appears that Aquinas connects ‘being’ with *species*, that is, the formal character or essence of a thing, which, in turn, is signified by the transcendental ‘thing’ (*res*), because ‘being’ and ‘thing’ are uniquely combined in the complex notion of ‘that which is’ (*quod est*). Indeed, in *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas argues that *res* or essence is that through which a thing has its being. Therefore, whilst ‘one’ is constituted by *mode*, we can say that ‘thing’ is constituted by *species*, that is, the formal or essential character of a being.

<sup>62</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 2.

<sup>63</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 obj. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 ad 3.

<sup>65</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6, ad 4: ‘cum dicit Augustinus, quod totum malum est repertum de specie privatione, non excludit alia duo: quia, ut ipse in eodem libro dicit, ubi est aliqua species, necessario est aliquis modus. Ordo etiam consequitur speciem et modum. Sed nominat speciem tantum, quia alia duo ipsam speciem consequuntur.’

comes first is *species*, then *mode*, and then *order*. However, if the true is constituted by *species* alone, and the good by *species*, *mode*, and *order*, and if this Augustinian triad corresponds to the logical structure whereby the transcendentals add to one another in a cumulative order, then a certain question arises: is there a relational transcendental whose *ratio* is constituted from the notes of *species* and *mode*, which would be situated between the true (*species*) and the good (*species*, *mode*, and *order*)?

In fact, the answer to this question can be found in *De Veritate* 22.1, as Aquinas answers an objection to his argument that all things seek the good naturally. He notes that, since nature is determined to one thing, it would seem that all things do not tend to the good naturally, because all things also seek the beautiful, as Dionysius says. But if they tended to the good naturally, they should not tend to anything else naturally.<sup>66</sup> He replies:

If appetite terminates in good [...] and the beautiful, this does not mean that it terminates in different goals [*diversa*]. By the very fact of tending to good a thing at the same time tends to the beautiful [...]. It tends to the beautiful inasmuch as it is proportioned [*modificatum*] and specified [*specificatum*] in itself. These notes are included in the essential character of good, but good adds a relationship [*ordine*] of what is perfective in regard to other things. Whoever tends to good, then, by that very fact tends to the beautiful.<sup>67</sup>

In other words, the fact that things tend to the beautiful does not mean that they do not tend to the good naturally, for the object or term of the appetite which we call good is also something that is beautiful. That is, the two are not *diverse*. Thus, because something tends toward the good, it is necessarily and simultaneously tending toward the beautiful, for the beautiful is that which is *modified* and *specified* in itself, two notes which are included in the *ratio* of the good, and to which the good 'adds' an *order* by which the thing in question is regarded as perfective in relation to another.<sup>68</sup> In other

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<sup>66</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1, obj. 12.

<sup>67</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 12.

<sup>68</sup> This is a striking parallel to our argument in chapter one, that the intellect has one natural object, namely, being, which it knows *naturaliter*, and yet it also knows other 'incomplex' notions like the 'one', and so forth, which are included in being and belong to it *per se*, so that Aquinas can speak of a plurality of primary conceptions that are naturally known by the intellect. Similarly, the appetite has

words, the beautiful is presupposed to the good, because the beautiful consists in the notes of *species* and *mode*, which are included in the character of the good, which is constituted by addition to the beautiful, because it also includes the note of *order*, which signifies the status of something being perfective in relation to another. In tending toward the beautiful and the good, the appetite is not tending towards diverse things, because the two are identical *secundum rem*, they only differ *secundum rationem*.<sup>69</sup> Crucially, what the notion of the good conceptually adds to that of the beautiful is the relation or order by which a being is perfective of another. Both the beautiful and the good consist in the notes of species and mode, that is, they both refer to the same thing in itself. However, over and above this, the good adds to the beautiful a notion that this being in itself can also be perfective of another. Therefore, this passage precisely answers our question. The beautiful presupposes the true, and precedes the good, in the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, which is thematised by the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*:

| <b>The cumulative order of the relational transcendentals</b> |                                     |                               |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| the 'true' ( <i>verum</i> )                                   | the 'beautiful' ( <i>pulchrum</i> ) | the 'good' ( <i>bonum</i> )   |
| <i>species</i>  | <i>species + mode</i>               | <i>species + mode + order</i> |

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one natural object, namely, the good, but because the beautiful is included in the notion of the good, the latter adding the note of *order* to the former, therefore, the appetite does not tend to something different than the good by tending to the beautiful. In other words, the appetite naturally tends to the good, but this natural object has the many formal aspects of 'being', 'thing', 'one', 'something', 'true', and 'beautiful', which are all *identical, convertible, and co-extensive* with its aspect of being 'good'.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1; I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

Therefore, we are now in a position to complete the outline of the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals listed in *De veritate* 1.1, which we began at the end of the previous chapter. Moreover, in light of our examination of Aquinas's wider thought – especially in relation to the framework of the one and the many, and also that of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order* – we can indicate the precise place that the beautiful implicitly holds within this order.

The introduction of the human soul marks the beginning of the second stage of Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* 1.1, and, according to Aertsen, the most innovative aspect of his account.<sup>70</sup> Because the human soul has two powers, namely, appetite and cognition, he lists two 'relational' transcendentals, the 'good', which names the agreement of being with the power of appetite, and the 'true', which names the agreement of being with the power of cognition. Aquinas mentions the good first because this enables him to conclude his exposition with a definition of the true in answer to the question posed at the beginning of the article, 'What is truth?' However, as we saw from our analysis of *De veritate* 21.3, in the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, when considered in themselves, the true precedes the good, since the former names the way in which a thing is perfective of another according to its *species* or formal character, whereas the latter names the way in which a thing is perfective of another not only in this way, but also according to the existence it has in reality, such that the character of the good includes more notes than the true, and is constituted by a kind of addition to it.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, as he also argues in *Summa theologiae* I, 16.4, absolutely speaking, the true is prior to the good because, among other things, knowledge naturally precedes appetite, and the true regards knowledge, whereas the good regards appetite.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, the order of the relational transcendentals is mirrored and actualised in the order of the operations of the rational soul: the true precedes the good, just as knowledge precedes appetite.

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<sup>70</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 257.

<sup>71</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3.

<sup>72</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4.

Therefore, to continue the outline with which we concluded the previous chapter, because the human soul first relates to reality through its intellect and apprehensive powers, following upon the notion of ‘something’ (*aliquid*), the fourth ‘general’ or transcendental mode of being is the ‘true’ (*verum*), which expresses the idea of ‘that which is conformable to intellect’, or ‘that which is knowable’. This presupposes the diversity of one being from another, for the human intellect can only know something insofar as it is one in itself and divided from other unities. As Aquinas argues in *De veritate* 2.15, a thing is one by being ‘undivided in itself and distinct from others’, and so in order to know something we ‘must know its distinction from other things.’<sup>73</sup> In other words, the ‘true’ presupposes the idea of ‘something’, to which it adds directly. Furthermore, in *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas defines the proper meaning of the true as the ‘conformity’ or ‘adequation’ of intellect and thing (*res*). In this respect, the *ratio* of the true has a particular connection with the first transcendental, namely, ‘thing’. Not only ‘thing’, but also ‘one’ and ‘something’ are presupposed to the ‘true’, but ‘thing’ is especially assumed into the relational register of the ‘true’, as that aspect of a being to which the soul relates in the order of truth. In this sense, *res* is especially a precondition of *verum*.

The fifth and final transcendental explicitly derived by Aquinas is the ‘good’ (*bonum*), which means ‘that which is desirable’, and it expresses the relation of the human will or appetite to being. This follows upon the soul’s relation to being through the intellect, because that which moves the will is the *bonum apprehensum*.<sup>74</sup> In other words, the good is only desirable insofar as it has been apprehended (for there can be no desire for something without some kind of knowledge), and so the good adds to

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<sup>73</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 15: ‘qui non intelligit aliquid unum nihil intelligit; per hoc autem aliquid est unum quod est in se indivisum et ab aliis distinctum’. Cf. Therefore, ‘when Thomas says that “true” conceptually presupposes “one” in question 21, article 3, “one” does not have its strict meaning of “that which is undivided in itself” but rather the broader meaning that Thomas occasionally gives it: “that which is undivided in itself and *divided from others*.” This extended meaning is of course merely a composite of the definitions that Thomas gives to “one” and “something” in question 1, article 1.’ Rubin, “‘Thing” and “Something” among the Transcendentals’, 423.

<sup>74</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 8, a. 1. Aquinas also argues that the intellect moves the will as a formal principle, by presenting it with its object and therefore specifying or determining its act. See *STh* I-II, q. 9, a. 1.

the true. Likewise, as Aquinas argues in *De veritate* 21.3, the good adds to the true by way of cumulative addition, for whereas the true is perfective according to *species* alone, the good is perfective according to *species* and *esse*. Whereas the *species* which perfects the intellect is not present in the mind according to its natural existence, by contrast, the good does perfect by being present in the soul according to the natural existence it has in reality.<sup>75</sup> In this way, in the order of the good, one being by reason of its act of existing stands towards another as an end that can perfect and complete it. Again, this demonstrates that the *ratio* of the good has a particular connection with the third transcendental, namely, ‘something’ or ‘some-other-thing’. All the transcendentals are presupposed to the ‘good’, but ‘something’ is especially assumed into the relational register of the ‘good’, as that aspect under which the soul relates to the existence or being of another in the order of goodness, namely, the actual existence in reality of a diversity of other beings which can be ordered to one another as ends. In this sense, *aliquid* is especially a precondition of *bonum*.

However, as we arrive at the end of our outline of the systematic order of those transcendentals derived by Aquinas in *De veritate* 1.1, we must, again, pose the question: does the good add directly to the true? We have suggested that the transcendentals ‘thing’, ‘one’, and ‘something’ are the ontological constituents that are the preconditions of the soul’s relation to being in the order of the ‘true’ and the ‘good’, and that there is a special connection between *res-verum* and *aliquid-bonum*. But this begs the question as to whether there is a relational transcendental that has a special connection with the ‘one’ (*unum*), a notion that signifies the existence of a being, not as other or diverse – under which aspect the existence of another being can be an end towards which the appetite tends as some-other-thing (*aliquid*), which perfects and completes the one tending to that end<sup>76</sup> – but as something that is intrinsically whole

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<sup>75</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘In quantum autem unum ens secundum esse suum est perfectivum alterius et consummativum, habet rationem finis respectu illius quod ab eo perficitur; et inde est quod omnes recte definientes bonum ponunt in ratione eius aliquid quod pertinet ad habitudinem finis’.

and harmonious in itself. Likewise, we have seen from our analysis of the Augustinian triad that *species-mode-order* corresponds to the triads *thing-one-something* and *true-beautiful-good*, and in such a way that the Augustinian note of 'mode' corresponds with both 'one' (*unum*) and 'beautiful' (*pulchrum*). Therefore, we can propose the following as the complete outline of the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, that is implicit in Aquinas's metaphysical thought:

| <b>The Augustinian triad <i>species-mode-order</i><br/>and the systematic order of the transcendentals</b> |                               |                                       |                                      |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|  | <i>species</i>                | <i>mode</i>                           | <i>order</i>                         |
| Ontological precondition   | 1. 'thing'<br>( <i>res</i> )  | 2. 'one'<br>( <i>unum</i> )           | 3. 'something'<br>( <i>aliquid</i> ) |
| Relation of the soul   | 4. 'true'<br>( <i>verum</i> ) | 5. 'beautiful'<br>( <i>pulchrum</i> ) | 6. 'good'<br>( <i>bonum</i> )        |

Of course, within the cumulative order of the transcendentals, *res*, *unum*, and *aliquid* are all presupposed to *verum*, *pulchrum*, and *bonum*, but the above categorisation in pairs, in relation to the Augustinian triad, articulates the way in which the relational transcendentals correlate with the particular aspects of a being demarcated by the framework of the one and the many. Thus, the 'good', for instance, is constituted by addition to the previous five transcendentals, and so, like the 'true' and the 'beautiful', it presupposes 'thing', 'one', and 'something'. Nevertheless, its addition to being at a relational level, is most similar to the addition to being by 'something' at the level presupposed to the relational transcendentals. That is, just as

'something' adds the idea of a being's diversity within a multitude, its division from others which are also 'beings' and 'one', likewise, the 'good' adds the idea that the being or existence of another within a multitude can be perfective of another member of that multitude. Similarly, the 'true' presupposes 'thing', 'one', and 'something', but Aquinas explicitly defines it as the 'adequation' of intellect and 'thing', and so there is a particular connection between these two under the heading of *species*, which is the Augustinian note that signifies the formal character or essence of a being. Therefore, one of our tasks in the chapters which follow is to demonstrate that there is a particular connection between the 'beautiful' and the 'one'. Indeed, this outline can only be tentative at this stage, and it certainly requires a thorough defence in reference to those texts in which Aquinas treats the nature of the beautiful at more length. This will be our central task in the next part of this study. In particular, there are three specific questions that we must address.

The first concerns the relationship between the beautiful and the good. Historically, Aquinas has been interpreted as holding that the beautiful is merely a species of the good, and not a distinct transcendental in its own right. This conclusion seems to be supported by, among other things, the fact that Aquinas never includes the beautiful among the list of the transcendentals. Moreover, there are places where he argues that the beautiful 'adds' to the good, which would seem to contradict the order presented above. Therefore, we will deal with these questions in the next chapter.

Secondly, we must examine the way in which Aquinas defines the *ratio* of beauty according to the Dionysian dual formulation of 'brightness' (*claritas*) and 'harmony' (*consonantia*),<sup>77</sup> in order to examine whether this characterisation coheres with the characterisation of the beautiful as constituted by the Augustinian notes of 'species' and 'mode'. And if it does, we must also ask, does the unique addition to

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<sup>77</sup> For example, see *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

being made by the beautiful cohere with that made by the one at the level presupposed to the relational transcendentals? This will be our concern in chapter six.

Having carefully defined the *metaphysical* nature of beauty in the next two chapters, we will be in a position in the final chapter to complete our study with a consideration of the *anthropological* dimension of the beautiful. If the beautiful fits between the true and the good, cognition and appetite, intellect and will, then the anthropological question emerges, can there be a relation of the soul to being that is a relation *to* the will *through* the intellect? Likewise, is there an element in Aquinas's anthropology of the soul that corresponds with this potential relation? We will address these questions in chapter seven, where we will consider the soul's encounter with beauty in the experience of love.

## PART TWO

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD

The nature of the 'beautiful' is somewhat paradoxical in the thought of Aquinas. On the one hand, it seems to enjoy a certain nobility, which is evident from the fact that fundamentally important metaphysical and theological truths are frequently expressed in terms of this predicate. For instance, the order of the processions of the Son and the Holy Spirit – an order which is reflected in the realm of nature – displays the beauty of divine wisdom.<sup>1</sup> In the account of creation in the Book of Genesis, the giving of form to corporeal creatures is interpreted in terms of the bestowal of a threefold beauty, consisting in light, visibility, and adornment.<sup>2</sup> The Church's diversity and order, both in terms of its ministers, states, and duties, and also in terms of the different gifts of grace given to its members, is described as its beauty.<sup>3</sup> Virtue is the spiritual beauty of the soul,<sup>4</sup> as is grace,<sup>5</sup> which, in turn, suffers privation through mortal sin.<sup>6</sup> Creatures lead to the knowledge of God chiefly by their beauty, by which they manifest the wisdom of their maker and governor,<sup>7</sup> and the contemplative life, which is ultimately ordered to the contemplation of God in the beatific vision, is by its very nature and essence concerned with beauty.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, beauty is a divine name, and one that Aquinas particularly associates with the person of the Son.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *STh* I, q. 36, a. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *STh* I, q. 66, a. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 112, a. 4; II-II, q. 183, a. 2

<sup>4</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 110, a. 2 s.c.

<sup>6</sup> *STh* III, q. 87, a. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *STh Supplement*, q. 91, a. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 2 ad 3.

<sup>9</sup> *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8.

On the other hand, if we can speak of the nobility of beauty, then we can also speak of its relative absence in Aquinas's thought. For example, there is no separate *quaestio disputata* ever devoted to this subject in any of Aquinas's works. Instead, his most important discussions of the beautiful occur in the context of articles that principally concern the nature of the good, often merely being relegated to the replies to certain objections.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it is never included in any list of the transcendentals, and at no point does Aquinas argue that the beautiful makes an 'addition' to being *qua* being. Instead, the framework by which he compares being with its transcendental modes is only ever employed to discuss the identity *secundum rem*, and the difference *secundum rationem*, of the beautiful with the *good*.

In the first part of this study, we concluded that, when viewed within the context of Aquinas's wider metaphysical thought, the beautiful implicitly occupies a distinct place within the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, as the general mode of being which presupposes the true and precedes the good. However, we also suggested that this conclusion can only be tentative until tested against Aquinas's major treatments of the beautiful itself. Therefore, given the paradox described just above, in this chapter we will examine Aquinas's comparison of the beautiful with the good. First, we will examine the historic and influential interpretation that the beautiful is merely a 'species of the good', wholly contained within the appetible order in such a way that its distinct transcendental status cannot be granted. Secondly, and by contrast, we will explore Aquinas's 'division' of the good, in order to make an initial suggestion about the unique nature of the beautiful in its conceptual distinction from the good. Thirdly, and finally, we will ask whether the beautiful 'adds' to the good, as some of Aquinas's discussions seem to imply, or if, in fact, it is the good that makes an addition to the beautiful. This will lay the groundwork for the next chapter, in which we will examine more closely the specific

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<sup>10</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1; *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3. Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 345.

*ratio* of the beautiful in terms of ‘brightness’ (*claritas*) and ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*), and its connection with the Augustinian notes of ‘species’ and ‘mode’.

*The beautiful: a species of the good?*

Aquinas’s comparison of being and the good is extensive and explicit. As we have already seen, in *De veritate* 1.1 and 21.1 he considers the way in which the good is said to ‘add’ to being. In *Summa theologiae* I, 5.1 he asks this question again, making it clear that the two are ‘identical’ *secundum rem*, and ‘diverse’ only *secundum rationem*, such that the good merely adds to being the notion of ‘appetibility’ or ‘desirability’, a logical concept that is ultimately reducible to being, for all being is some kind of act, and every act implies some kind of perfection, and all perfection is desirable (and therefore good) in some kind of way, for all desire their own perfection.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, insofar as they are identical *secundum rem*, Aquinas also devotes separate treatments to the consequent notions of both the ‘convertibility’ of being and the good,<sup>12</sup> and also their ‘co-extension’.<sup>13</sup> Finally, insofar as they are diverse *secundum rationem*, he devotes separate treatments to the consequent notions of both the ‘priority’ of being in relation to the good,<sup>14</sup> and also the ‘order of proximity’ within which the good makes a ‘cumulative addition’ to being, namely, that the *ratio* of the good is constituted by addition to the true.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, Aquinas compares the good with being according to all six of the generic hallmarks of the transcendentals that we identified in chapter one.

However, this direct comparison finds no parallel in Aquinas’s treatment of the beautiful. Instead, this terminology is reserved exclusively for the comparison of the

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<sup>11</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 2.

<sup>13</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 3.

<sup>14</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3.

beautiful with the good, which might give the impression that the former is situated entirely *inside* of the latter. In his commentary upon Dionysius's *On the Divine Names*, Aquinas explicitly states that the two are 'convertible' with one another,<sup>16</sup> and that there is nothing that does not participate in beauty and goodness, since everything is beautiful and good according to its proper form<sup>17</sup> – in other words, the beautiful and the good are co-extensive with one another, and therefore with being. Now, this might seem to imply that the beautiful is a transcendental: if the beautiful is convertible and co-extensive with the good, then surely this must mean that it is a transcendental mode of being itself. However, we must ask: is the beautiful convertible and coextensive with the good because it is a distinct term with its own unique addition to being within the systematic order of the transcendentals? Or is it so because it is merely a synonym of the good? If the latter, then the beautiful is not a distinct transcendental, but just another term which expresses what the good 'adds' to being, perhaps as a particular and internal specification of the good itself. As such, the crucial question concerns whether the beautiful and the good are both 'identical' *secundum rem* and also 'diverse' *secundum rationem*. Furthermore, the former must differ from the latter in such a way that it makes a unique 'addition' to being, that is, not one made by any other transcendental.

More than once, Aquinas compares the good and the beautiful as being 'identical' in subject, and 'different' only rationally.<sup>18</sup> However, it is not immediately clear from his treatment of this theme whether this establishes a distinct and unique *ratio* for the beautiful. Instead, it might be arguable that the beautiful is merely a species of the good. This interpretation has been advanced in connection with Aquinas's discussion concerning whether the good is the sole cause of love (*amor*).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *In De Div. nom.* IV, lect. 22 (590): 'pulchrum convertitur cum bono'.

<sup>17</sup> *In De Div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (355): 'nihil est quod non participet pulchro et bono, cum unumquodque sit pulchrum et bonum secundum propriam formam'. Cf. *In De Div. nom.* IV, lect. 6 (360).

<sup>18</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1; I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3; *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (356).

<sup>19</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1.

Love, he argues, pertains to the appetitive power, and because the appetite is a passive power its object stands in relation to it as the cause of its movement or act.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, since it belongs to the appetitive power, the proper cause of love must be its object, which is the good, because love implies a certain ‘connaturality’ or ‘complacency’ of the lover towards the beloved, and that which is connatural or proportionate to any particular thing is the good. Therefore, the good is the proper cause of love.<sup>21</sup>

However, in the third objection, Aquinas cites the words of Dionysius that not only the good but also the beautiful is beloved by all, the implication being that the good might not be the sole cause of love, and that the beautiful must be a cause of love too.<sup>22</sup> He replies, the beautiful and the good are ‘identical’ and only ‘differ’ *rationally*.<sup>23</sup> The good and the beautiful differ rationally because, on the one hand, since the good is defined as ‘what all desire’, it belongs to the *ratio* of the good that the appetite is brought to rest ‘in it’ (*in eo*), but, on the other hand, it belongs to the *ratio* of the beautiful that the appetite is brought to rest simply by the sight (*aspectu*) or knowledge (*cognitione*) of it. Therefore, the beautiful is especially related to those senses that are most cognitive (*maxime cognoscitivi*), that is, sight and hearing, which serve human reason, for we speak of beautiful sights and sounds, but we do not properly speak of beautiful tastes and odours.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The appetitive powers of the soul are passive because they depend upon the apprehensive powers to move them by presenting them with their proper object. See *STh* I, q. 80, a. 1; I-II, q. 9, a. 1.

<sup>21</sup> David C. Schindler highlights that there are certain tensions within this account, and he suggests that there are traces in Aquinas’s thought of an ancient tradition which connects love with the beautiful as its proper object. See, ‘Love and Beauty: the “Forgotten Transcendental” in Thomas Aquinas’, *Communio* 44 (Summer 2017), 334-356. Cf. *Love and the Postmodern Predicament: Rediscovering the Real in Beauty, Goodness, and Truth*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018), esp. 85-117. Schindler’s work will be integral to our argument in chapter seven.

<sup>22</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 obj. 3. This is very similar to the argument in *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 obj. 12, namely, that the natural object of the will is not only the good, but also the beautiful. Indeed, it is based upon the same statement of Dionysius.

<sup>23</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* This does not mean that the intellect cannot appreciate smells and tastes as beautiful when it considers them under a certain universal aspect. For example, when going into the home of someone who has prepared a meal for us, it is perfectly natural to describe the smells and tastes of that meal as ‘beautiful’, in the sense that they are the signs of our host’s *gift* of this meal to us, for instance. In doing so, we are not simply saying that the meal is desirable or good to our senses, but that it is

Indeed, because of the proximity of the sensitive nature to the intellectual or rational nature, Aquinas argues that the pleasures of the senses play a different part in human beings than in irrational animals.<sup>25</sup> For, other animals do not take pleasure in the senses except insofar as they relate to the sense of touch. For example, the lion takes pleasure in seeing the stag, or in hearing its voice, only insofar as the stag is the lion's food. By contrast, human beings can take pleasure from the senses other than that of touch, simply because of the 'fittingness' (*convenientiam*) of the sensible object perceived by those senses, as in the case of the pleasure resulting from hearing a well-harmonised sound, for instance, which has nothing to do with the preservation of human nature. Rather, we might say that a well-harmonised sound is simply a fitting *measure* or *mode* in relation to the *form* or *species* of music itself, which is why we take pleasure in it.

Aquinas concludes that it is clear that the beautiful 'adds' to the good a certain 'order' (*ordinem*) to the cognitive faculty, such that good means that which simply pleases the appetite (*simpliciter complacet appetitui*), whereas the beautiful is said of that of which the very apprehension is pleasing (*id cuius ipsa apprehensio placet*).<sup>26</sup> This would seem to imply that the good is indeed the proper cause of love, because it is that in which the appetite comes to rest and takes pleasure *simpliciter*, whereas the beautiful is the cause of love only insofar as it pleases the appetite and brings it to rest *in a certain respect*, namely, as an object of apprehension. We might say, then, that the beautiful is that which brings rest and pleasure to the appetite *secundum quid*, that is, as the good of certain apprehensive powers. In this case, the good would be a more general notion, one that would include the full range of ways in which the appetite is pleased and brought to rest, within which the beautiful is included as just one kind.

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excellent in a sense that transcends mere self-interest, even though this latter aspect is inseparable from our experience. This distinction will be developed in what follows.

<sup>25</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 141, a. 4 ad 3.

<sup>26</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

In other words, the difference between the good and the beautiful would merely be that between the absolute and the relative, the universal and the particular.

If this is the case, then the conceptual ‘addition’ of the beautiful to the good would be that of an internal specification within the order of the good itself. This was the conclusion that Cajetan famously drew from this passage, namely, that the beautiful is *quaedam boni species*.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the good is the *generic* notion of that which brings delight and pleasure to the appetite, and the beautiful is a *specific* kind of good, which brings delight and pleasure to the appetite as a result of being known by certain apprehensive powers. The good is said to bring the appetite to rest *simpliciter* because it is an all-embracing term or genus, within which the beautiful is included as a species that brings the appetite to rest in a particular respect, that is, *secundum quid*. Accordingly, the good is the proper cause of love, and Dionysius can speak of the beautiful as being loved by all insofar as it is a species of the good.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that Aquinas singles out the senses of sight and hearing in relation to the beautiful, whilst excluding the senses of taste and smell. In this case, the objects of these four senses would all be certain kinds of the good, but they would differ in that the objects of sight and hearing are a kind of good that we call ‘beautiful’, whereas the objects of taste and smell, and touch for that matter, are different kinds of the good. Indeed, Aquinas distinguishes the exterior senses according as they are ‘immuted’ by a diversity of exterior sensible objects which are perceived *per se* by the senses.<sup>29</sup> Such immutation (*immutatio*) is twofold,

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<sup>27</sup> Cajetan makes this statement in his commentary on *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 3, ad 1, which can be found in *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, vol. 6 (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1891), 192. Likewise, Aertsen concludes from this passage that the beautiful is simply a ‘specification’ of the good. *The Transcendentals*, 347. Cf. Francis J. Kovach, ‘The Transcendentality of Beauty in Thomas Aquinas’, in *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter: Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung*, ed. Paul Wilpert and Willehad P. Eckert (Berline: Walter de Gruyter, 1961), 386-92, esp. 389-90.

<sup>28</sup> However, in this case, the beautiful could only be loved by all insofar as it is ‘identical’ with the good, because not all things participate knowledge, and so the beautiful cannot be loved by all as the good of the cognitive powers, that is, not according to its specific ‘difference’ within the order of the good.

<sup>29</sup> *STh* I, q. 78, a. 3.

namely, 'natural', which takes place by the form of the immuter being received according to its natural existence in the thing immuted, as heat is received into the thing heated, and 'spiritual', which takes place by the form of the immuter being received according to a spiritual mode of existence into the thing immuted, as colour is received into the pupil, which does not itself thereby become that same colour. In the sense of sight there is only spiritual immutation, while in the other senses there is spiritual and natural immutation, the latter occurring either in the object only, or in the object and the sense organ too. As such, sight is the most 'spiritual', 'perfect', and 'universal' of the senses, and Aquinas states that hearing is second, for the natural immutation involved in hearing regards only 'place', for sound is caused by percussion and commotion of air, and so the natural immutation of sound affects only the object and not the sense organ. Likewise, the natural immutation involved in the sense of smell only affects the object and not the sense organ too, for it occurs by alteration of the air, but as a form of motion, alteration is less perfect than local motion, the latter being involved in hearing, and so smell is less spiritual, perfect, and universal than hearing. By contrast, the sense organs involved in touch and taste are the most material, because they are affected by natural immutation in their respective operations, which are exercised through a medium united to them, as in the case of the hand which actually becomes hot by touching something hot, as also in the sense of taste, which is a kind of touch existing in the tongue only.<sup>30</sup> In this way, the senses of sight and hearing are the most cognitive, because they are the most spiritual and the most removed from material and natural immutation, and therefore they especially serve reason, which is itself a spiritual and immaterial reception of the intelligible *species* by which a thing is known in its universal aspect.<sup>31</sup>

This distinction among the senses might help to clarify the above distinction between the good and the beautiful. Absolutely or generically, the objects which stand

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<sup>30</sup> *STh* I, q. 78, a. 3 ad 4.

<sup>31</sup> *STh* I, q. 12, a. 4; q. 78, a. 1.

toward all of the senses as their good are naturally pleasing to them *simpliciter*. As Aquinas argues: 'Each power of the soul is a form or nature, and has a natural inclination to something. Wherefore each power desires by the natural appetite that object which is suitable to itself... as sight for seeing, or sound for hearing'.<sup>32</sup> However, within this generic notion we might also distinguish a particular aspect under which objects are pleasing *secundum quid*, that is, simply by being apprehended and without being united to the sense organ to which they are pleasing, namely, that which is *beautiful*, which is simply the good of the senses of sight and hearing. This, perhaps, would be the 'addition' of a relation to the cognitive power that the beautiful makes to the good, as an internal specification of the good within the appetible order.

As Aquinas explains in his treatment of pleasure (*delectatio*) itself, in contrast to other natural things, animals perceive when they attain to the perfections and states becoming to their nature, and from this perception there arises a movement in the sensitive appetite, which is called pleasure or delight.<sup>33</sup> This movement of pleasure is a certain 'repose' of the appetite (*quies quaedam appetitus*), which is caused by an *immutatio* in the appetite brought about by the presence and possession of a connatural good.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, Aquinas argues that two things are required for pleasure, namely, the attainment of the fitting good, and knowledge of this attainment, each of which is a certain kind of operation.<sup>35</sup> However, he also makes a distinction between two different ways in which pleasure is caused:

The objects of operations are not pleasurable save inasmuch as they are united to us; either by knowledge alone, as when we take pleasure in thinking of or looking at certain things; or in some other way in addition to knowledge; as when a man takes pleasure in knowing that he has something good – riches, honour, or the like; which would not be pleasurable unless they were apprehended as possessed. For as the Philosopher observes (*Polit. ii, 2*) *we take great pleasure in looking upon a thing as our own, by reason of the natural love we have for ourselves*.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>33</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 31, a. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 31, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>35</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 32, a. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 32, a. 1 ad. 1.

In other words, we might characterise the good as that which brings the appetite to rest in pleasure *simpliciter* because it does so as both possessed and also as known as possessed. By contrast, we might characterise the beautiful as that which brings the appetite to rest in pleasure *secundum quid*, because it does so by knowledge alone, and not by the possession of a good naturally united to us.<sup>37</sup> This would be why sight and hearing are singled out in relation to the perception of beauty, because, unlike smell and taste, they take delight in simply knowing their proper objects without being naturally united to them.

Furthermore, we need not limit the experience of the beautiful merely to sensible apprehension, for Aquinas states that it is that which brings the appetite to rest by being seen (*aspectu*) or known (*cognitione*), the latter term naturally including intelligible knowledge as well as sensible. Similarly, in singling out the senses of sight and hearing, Aquinas explicitly states that these serve reason (*ratio*). Indeed, the passage as a whole consists in a comparison between the good and the beautiful, and since the former is not limited to sensible objects, there is no reason to suppose that the latter is either. If it were, this would have been a simple way to differentiate the two notions, but Aquinas does not make this distinction. In fact, in the very next article, he argues that the *principium* of 'sensitive love' (*amoris sensitivi*) is bodily sight – one of the two senses he has just associated with the experience of the beautiful – and the *principium* of 'spiritual love' (*amoris spiritualis*) is the contemplation of spiritual beauty or goodness, from which Aquinas concludes that knowledge (*cognitio*) is the cause of love for the same reason as good is, which can be loved only if known.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, in his treatment of pleasure he makes a distinction between sensitive pleasure (*delectatio*) and intellectual pleasure or joy (*gaudium*), and argues that the latter is a species of the former, namely, a rational delight consequent upon reason, which moves the intellectual appetite, or will, in contrast to a delight of the body,

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<sup>37</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3: 'pulchrum autem dicatur id cuius ipsa apprehensio placet.'

<sup>38</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 2. Cf Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX, 5.12.

which moves the sensitive appetite in such a way that it is accompanied by a ‘bodily transmutation’.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, whatever we desire naturally as a sensitive delight, he argues, can also be the object of reasoned desire and delight, but not vice versa, so that whatever is the object of *delectatio* can also be the object of *gaudium* in rational creatures.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the human soul can experience intellectual joy in the apprehension of sensible beauty, for all the knowledge we have through the intellect begins in sense, and comprises a knowledge of sensible realities under their universal aspects. In this way, the beautiful might also be characterised as the good of the intellect.

Thus, it may appear that the beautiful is not a distinct transcendental predicate, and that it does not really differ from the good in any meaningful way, but rather is an internal specification within the appetible order of the good itself. In other words, it may seem that the beautiful is simply a species of the good, namely, the good of certain apprehensive powers, which brings pleasure and rest to the appetite merely by being apprehended in some way. In which case, it would be right to characterise the beautiful as a particular kind of pleasurable object.

However, Aquinas’s thought resists this conclusion in a number of important ways. For instance, the ‘pleasant’ is one of three categories into which Aquinas divides the good, the other two being the ‘useful’ and the ‘honourable’.<sup>41</sup> Upon closer examination, this division of the good reveals that the beautiful is not merely one kind of pleasant thing, that is, not merely that which gives pleasure to the apprehensive powers, and also that its proper nature resists the simplistic reduction to a mere species of the good. Indeed, attending to the inner logic of this threefold division reveals that, whilst the beautiful and the good are identical with one another, unlike the latter, the former does not properly belong within the appetible order according to its own proper nature.

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<sup>39</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 31, aa. 3, 4.

<sup>40</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 31, a. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 6.

*The division of the good: the honourable, the useful, and the pleasant*

Aquinas states that the division of the good, into the 'honourable' (*honestum*), the 'useful' (*utile*), and the 'pleasant' (*delectabile*), seems to be proper to human goodness, but if we consider the essence of goodness from a higher and more general perspective, we find that this division properly belongs to the good *qua* good.<sup>42</sup> Now, something is good insofar as it is appetible (i.e., desirable) and is the terminus of the movement of appetite. Furthermore, that which moves towards an end is terminated *simpliciter* by that which is the ultimate end, and it is terminated *secundum quid* by the intermediate means, by which only some part of the motion is terminated, and through which it comes to the ultimate end where the movement is terminated *simpliciter*. In the movement of appetite, the appetible thing that terminates the movement of the appetite *secundum quid*, as a means through which it tends towards something else, is called the 'useful' (*utile*). For example, exercise may be desired in order to achieve the ultimate goal of health. Furthermore, the ultimate term or end of movement admits of a further twofold distinction: either it is the thing itself towards which the movement of appetite tends, namely, a place or form; or it is rest in that thing. On the one hand, that which is desired as the ultimate, which terminates the movement of appetite *totaliter*, as a certain thing towards which the appetite tends *per se*, is called the 'honourable' (*honestum*). On the other hand, that which terminates the movement of the appetite as rest in the thing desired is the 'pleasant' (*delectatio*). We might say that we take pleasure in something without becoming the thing in which we take pleasure, as, for instance, a person can take pleasure in a pint of beer without assuming the form of beer in any enduring sense. Whereas what we desire in the honourable is a form that will make us honourable ourselves, in a sense that continues beyond the mere moment of acquisition. In other words, the 'immutation' that comes about by the pleasurable object is momentary and ceases with the withdrawal of the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

object's influence, whereas the 'immutation' that comes about by the honourable has the nature of a habit or quality, which is possessed in a way that is dependent upon the one in whom it exists.<sup>43</sup>

Aquinas argues that this threefold division belongs to the good according to its proper *ratio*, so it should not to be confused with the division of the good by the ten *praedicamenta* or 'categories', which, in turn, applies to the good insofar as it is 'identical in subject' with being.<sup>44</sup> That is, according to the division of the good by the ten categories, we can speak of different kinds of good things, whether that is different kinds of substance, or different kinds of accidents. By contrast, the threefold division of the good into the useful, the pleasant, and the honourable is intrinsic to the good itself, and so it can apply to every good thing of whatever kind, substance or accident. As such, this division of the good is not according to the opposition of different good 'things' (*res*), but according to the same thing considered under the opposition of different 'aspects' (*rationes*).<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the 'honourable' concurs in the same subject with the 'useful' and the 'pleasant', the three differing only rationally.<sup>46</sup> In other words, in some way, every instance of the good falls under the aspect of the useful, the pleasant, and the honourable, and so, as Aquinas argues at the beginning of his discussion, this division ought not to be limited to human goodness, but belongs to the good *qua* good, whatever kind it may be.

According to this purely *rational* diversity, the 'pleasant' has no aspect of desirableness other than the fact that it is delightful, which sometimes might be harmful (i.e., not useful) or dishonourable.<sup>47</sup> For example, eating food is pleasurable to the sensitive appetite, but it may be contrary to the proper end of the rational

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 49, a. 1; q. 51, a. 2.

<sup>44</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 6 ad 1.

<sup>45</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 6 ad 2.

<sup>46</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Strictly speaking, the pleasant is desired *propter se* by the sensitive appetite, whereas the honourable is desired *propter se* by the rational appetite, which tends to that which is fitting with reason. Therefore, the pleasant is not desired in itself simply and absolutely, for that which is pleasant to the sensitive appetite may not be in accordance with reason, and therefore contrary to the proper end of the rational appetite. See *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3 ad 1.

appetite if one's eating is excessive or deprives another of the food that they need. Next, the 'useful' is not desirable in itself, for it is desired solely because it leads to something else, in the way that going on a diet is not desirable in itself, but only insofar as it leads to health. Finally, the 'honourable' is desirable in itself, as in the case of providing food for the destitute, and because the honourable is ordained according to reason, it is naturally becoming to human beings, and therefore also pleasant and useful.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the good is not divided 'univocally' into the useful, the pleasant, and the honourable, as if it were predicated of these three equally; rather, the good is predicated 'analogously', that is, according to the prior and the posterior: first, it is predicated of the honourable, secondly, of the pleasant, and thirdly, of the useful.<sup>49</sup> We might say that the useful is the *instrumental good*, because it is desired for the sake of something else, the pleasant is the *qualified good*, because it can sometimes be contrary to a higher good, and the honourable is the *intrinsic good*, because it is a form that is always desirable simply for its own sake.

Aquinas's argument that this threefold division of the good is not *secundum subiectum* but *secundum rationem* is striking,<sup>50</sup> for this is precisely how he formulates the distinction between the good and the beautiful, as he associates the latter with a particular way in which the appetite is brought to rest, that is, with a particular kind of the pleasant.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it might seem that the place of the beautiful is reducible merely to the category of the pleasant, as a species within the division of the good. This might be particularly applicable to instances of sensible beauty, which are pleasing to the natural appetite of the powers of sight and hearing. However, Aquinas associates spiritual or intelligible beauty with another member of this threefold division of the good, namely, the honourable. This is of crucial importance for the transcendental status of the beautiful, since the spiritual or intelligible dimension of

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<sup>48</sup> See *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 6 ad 3. Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3: 'In pluribus tamen est delectabile quam utile et honestum, quia omne utile et honestum est aliquo modo delectabile, sed non convertitur'.

<sup>50</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3.

<sup>51</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

the transcendentals is most relevant to their status as the first conceptions (*prima*) of the intellect.

Aquinas makes this connection between spiritual beauty and the honourable during the course of his discussion about the virtue of temperance in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>52</sup> He explains, *honestas* refers to an 'honourable state' (*honoris status*), so that something is called *honestum* if it is 'worthy of honour' (*honore dignum*).<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, honour is due to excellence, and human excellence is chiefly considered in respect of virtue, because virtue is the disposition to the perfect and best. Therefore, properly speaking, the honourable refers to the same thing as virtue.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, to give honour is a kind of testimony (*testimonium*) to the virtue or excellence of the one who is honoured, such that virtue alone is the due cause of honour.<sup>55</sup> However, someone can be honoured not only because of their own virtue, but also because of the virtue of another, as princes and prelates are honoured, even if they are evil, insofar as they represent, in their person, God or the community over which they preside, just as parents are to be honoured because of their participation in the dignity of God, who is the father of all.<sup>56</sup>

Now, in his division of the good Aquinas describes the honourable as that which is desired *per se*, that is, for its own sake. However, this presents a potential

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<sup>52</sup> There was a precedent for this identification in the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, which did so upon the authority of Augustine. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 347-48 & 355.

<sup>53</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* Aquinas argues that, specifically, the honourable is an integral part or condition of the virtue of temperance, because, on the one hand, the honourable is a kind of spiritual beauty, which is opposed to the ugly (*turpe*), and, on the other hand, temperance repels what is most ugly and indecent in human beings, namely, brutish pleasures (*brutales voluptates*), and so it is that the very name of 'temperance' is most significant of the good of reason, to which it belongs to *moderate* and *temper* 'evil desires' (*concupiscentias pravas*). See *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 4. In other words, the honourable acts as a *preceding* restraint on certain *desires* in the order of the good.

<sup>55</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 1 ad 3. The excellence of another consists radically in some internal choice which is made known by some external action or conduct. Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 103, a. 2: 'honor nihil est aliud quam quaedam protestatio de excellentia bonitatis alicuius.' Likewise, whereas the giving of honour to God, whereby we acknowledge his excellence, can consist merely in the internal movement of the heart, the giving of honour among human beings, whereby we witness to one another's excellence, is by means of external signs, either verbally, or by deeds, such as bowing, saluting, offering gifts, erecting statues, and so forth. See *STh* II-II, q. 103, a. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 63, a. 4.

problem for his equation of the honourable with the virtuous, for the virtues are not desired simply for their own sake, but for the sake of happiness, which is the reward and end of virtue.<sup>57</sup> Admittedly, strictly speaking, only the last end, namely, happiness, can be desired entirely for its own sake, and never for the sake of something else. Nevertheless, the virtues are desired for their own sake inasmuch as they have in themselves some aspect of goodness which would be desirable even if no further good accrued to us through them – that is, they attract us by their own power and dignity, and this suffices to give something the nature of the honourable, as in the case of virtue, truth, and knowledge – even though they are also desirable for the sake of something else, namely, inasmuch as they lead us to the more perfect good and end of happiness.<sup>58</sup> Thus, whereas ‘praise’ (*laus*) is due to virtue insofar as it is desirable and ‘useful’ for the sake of something else, namely, God and happiness, the last end, by contrast, ‘honour’ (*honor*) is due to virtue for its own sake.<sup>59</sup> In other words, we praise virtue as an *instrumental good* that conduces towards an end (i.e., as ‘useful’), but we honour virtue simply and absolutely because it is an *intrinsic good*, which is desired for its own sake, because of its own inherent goodness and dignity. Therefore, Aquinas argues,

Praise is distinguished from honour... because by paying honour to a person we bear witness to a person's excelling goodness absolutely, whereas by praising him we bear witness to his goodness in reference to an end: thus we praise one that works well for an end. On the other hand, honour is given even to the best, which is not referred to an end, but has already arrived at the end.<sup>60</sup>

In other words, virtue is *praised* insofar as it is useful for an extrinsic end, and it is *honoured* insofar as it is an intrinsic end in itself, which is fitting to the nature of the one in whom it is found.

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<sup>57</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 1 obj. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 1 ad 1. Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3.

<sup>59</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 1 ad 2. Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 103, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>60</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 103, a. 1 ad 3. Aquinas also argues in this article that *glory* is the effect of honour and praise, because a person's goodness becomes clear (*claria*) to the knowledge of many when we bear witness to it. Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2 ad 2.

In respect of this distinction, it is important that Aquinas makes a connection between the honourable (i.e., the notion of an intrinsic excellence, as opposed to an extrinsic one) and the beautiful.<sup>61</sup> According to Dionysius, he argues, the *ratio* of the beautiful consists in the concurrence of ‘brightness’ and ‘due proportion’, which is why God is said to be beautiful, as being the cause of the ‘harmony’ and ‘brightness’ of the universe.<sup>62</sup> As such, corporeal beauty consists in ‘well-proportioned’ bodily members and a ‘due brightness’ of colour, and spiritual beauty consists in human conversation or action being ‘well-proportioned’ according to the spiritual ‘brightness’ of reason, namely, the honourable, or the virtuous, which ‘moderates’ (*moderatur*) all human affairs according to reason. As such, the honourable is what Augustine called ‘intelligible’ or ‘spiritual’ beauty, which is something other than merely visible beauty: ‘By honesty I mean intelligible beauty, which we properly designate as spiritual... many things are beautiful to the eye, which it would be hardly proper to call honest.’<sup>63</sup> In other words, the beauty of the body is a form of *sensible* beauty, but the beauty of the honourable is an *intelligible* beauty, because we perceive it as moral conduct that is an excellence in proportion to, and moderated by, the light of reason, and as such, it is intrinsically good or beautiful.

Therefore, Aquinas argues that something is called ‘honourable’ insofar as it has a certain beauty from its ‘ordination to reason’, that is, it has a certain excellence deserving of honour because of the spiritual beauty of that excellence.<sup>64</sup> In other words, the intrinsic excellence of the honourable, that is, its harmony or proportion with reason, *is its beauty*, and the honourable is deserving of honour *because it is beautiful*. If this spiritual beauty is an intrinsic excellence deserving of honour because

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<sup>61</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

<sup>62</sup> We will conduct a detailed examination of this dual formulation in the next chapter.

<sup>63</sup> Augustine, *Questions* 83, qu. 30, cited in *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2. In this respect, Aquinas recovers an Augustinian tradition of associating the moral good and the beautiful, a connection implied in the Greek term *kalos*, but lost in Cicero’s Latin translation *honestum*. See Aertsen, ‘Beauty in the Middle Ages,’ 87.

<sup>64</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3: ‘Dicitur enim aliquid honestum... in quantum habet decorum ex ordinatione rationis... secundum quod aliquid habet quondam excellentiam dignam honore propter spiritualem pulchritudinem.’

it is well-proportioned to, and harmonious with, the spiritual splendour of reason, then we might say that, in terms of the Augustinian triad, it is a certain 'measure' or 'mode' of being that is commensurate with the 'species' or 'form' of reason that is specifically becoming to human conduct. We can further articulate this idea by means of a very important framework that Aquinas employs in his comparison between the good and being, namely, because being and the good are 'diverse' *secundum rationem*, they are, therefore, predicated of something 'absolutely' (*simpliciter*) in different ways.<sup>65</sup>

On the one hand, 'being' properly signifies that something is in act, and because actuality is compared to potentiality, something is said to be a being *simpliciter* according as it is primarily distinguished from that which is only in potentiality. In other words, a thing is called a being *simpliciter* because of its 'substantial being', by which it is distinguished from non-being. By contrast, by any 'superadded' acts something exists *secundum quid* (i.e., relatively, or in a certain respect), that is, through the addition of various modes of accidental being. For instance, through the growth in the life of the virtues, a person's being changes in a certain respect, yet their being has not changed in an absolute sense, inasmuch as they are the same subsisting person or substance throughout the course of these accidental changes. As such, super-added accidents signify being *secundum quid*, and they do not take a thing out of potential being *simpliciter*, since they come to a pre-existing thing already in act. In other words, accidents do not exist in themselves, but they are that by which a particular subsisting substance exists in a certain manner, and the loss of a particular accident does not mean the loss of the subsisting thing's substantial being. Accordingly, that which has being *simpliciter* through its substantial form has its being augmented *secundum quid* by the acquisition of certain accidental modes of being.

On the other hand, the good signifies the idea of the perfect, which is desirable, and so, absolutely it denotes the idea of 'ultimate' perfection. Therefore, that which is

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<sup>65</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1 ad 1.

ultimately perfect and has attained to its end, through acts super-added to its substantial being, is called 'good' *simpliciter*. By contrast, that which does not have the ultimate perfection it ought to have – although it has some perfection insofar as it is a being in act – is called perfect or good not *simpliciter*, but *secundum quid*. For example, the mere fact that a person exists is a good thing, but this goodness is relative to the ultimate or absolute goodness of that person reaching the perfection of their nature, by which they can be said to be good *simpliciter*. Accordingly, Aquinas argues that 'goodness is spoken of as more or less according to a thing's superadded or supervening actuality [*actum supervenientem*], for example, as to knowledge or virtue.'<sup>66</sup> In other words, the fact that a person exists is a good thing, but this in itself does not make them a good person, whereas the saint, who has been perfected in the life of the virtues, is said to be good *simpliciter*. In summary, according to its primal and substantial being, that is, insofar as it is a being distinguished from mere potentiality, something is called 'being' *simpliciter* and 'good' *secundum quid*. By contrast, according to its ultimate actuality, through the super-addition of accidental modes of being such as knowledge and virtue, for instance, it is called 'being' *secundum quid* and 'good' *simpliciter*.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, Aquinas employs this framework in his discussion of human action, in which good and evil are found in the same way as they are in things, that is, there is as much goodness in a thing or action as there is being, since the good and being are convertible.<sup>68</sup> God alone has the entire 'plenitude' of his being and goodness in the unity and simplicity of the divine nature, he argues, whereas other things have the *plenitudinem essendi* that belongs to them according to a certain diversity, so that they have being in some respect but not according to the fullness that is due to them. For instance, a particular person may have being according to some aspect of

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<sup>66</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1 ad 3. Note, it is through super-added acts of accidental being, such as knowledge or virtue, that a substance attains to its end.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 11, a. 2 ad 1.

<sup>68</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 1.

knowledge, but lack being in respect of some virtue. Now, Aquinas argues, since the very fullness of being is the *ratio* of the good, if something lacks its due fullness of being it is not said to be good *simpliciter* (i.e., absolutely), but only *secundum quid* (i.e., in a certain respect), as it is also said, in this respect, to be a being *simpliciter*, and non-being *secundum quid*. Moreover, he also describes this ‘fullness of being’ as a fullness of *perfection* and *goodness*, which is due to a thing, not because of its substantial form, but because of the many super-added forms of ‘supervening accidents’.<sup>69</sup> In other words, we can speak of something as more or less good according as its substantial being is augmented with various kinds of accidental being, like the virtues, which is an increase of the fullness of being and perfection that a particular thing acquires through the actions or operations proper to its substantial form. When a particular nature or form attains to the end of its fullness of being, it can be called good *simpliciter*.

At the end of part one of this study, we concluded that the beautiful is particularly associated with the Augustinian note of ‘mode’ or ‘measure’, which signifies the harmonious proportion or commensuration of a particular form or ‘species’ with the act of existing that it receives, such that its being is received according to a certain measure that belongs to that form. In terms of the framework outlined just above, we might say that something is beautiful *secundum quid* insofar as there is a harmonious proportion and commensuration between its substantial form and the being it receives by which that thing is primally differentiated from mere potentiality. Furthermore, we might also say that a thing is beautiful *simpliciter* insofar as its substantial form has reached a ‘fullness of being’ and perfection through the super-addition of accidental modes of being. Each of these accidental modes of being is a form that has its own mode or measure of being, but we might say that, just as there is a primordial harmony between a thing’s substantial form and the act of being that it receives, there is a supplementary and augmented harmony between its substance and accidents, a diversity that is held together in the unity of a thing’s

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<sup>69</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 3.

‘plenitude of being’ according to the *measure* of that subject.<sup>70</sup> As Aquinas argues in *De virtutibus*, just as something is said to be good *simpliciter* because of its ‘total perfection’, likewise, something is said to be beautiful *simpliciter* because there is no deformity or ugliness in any *part*.<sup>71</sup> What this means, then, is that the honourable is spiritually beautiful because it is a *fitting augmentation* of the nature or substance in which it is found; a gratuitous and accidental super-addition, which is nevertheless wholly appropriate and becoming. It is a particular *measure* or *mode* of being that is wholly harmonious with the *form* or *species* of human being in which it is found. This is why the honourable is beautiful.

But if the intrinsic excellence of the honourable is its beauty, by virtue of its proportion to the splendour of reason, then this means that the honourable is not simply reducible to the category of the ‘desirable for its own sake’. That is, the honourable is not reducible to the order of the good, in which it is praised and desired as an instrumental good in relation to some extrinsic end of the appetitive subject; it can also be approached from within the order of the beautiful, in which it is honoured as something intrinsically excellent in itself. In other words, the honourable has a dual dimension. On the one hand, it is an object of desire, either as a good for its own sake, because it is a good that we desire for ourselves even if no further good accrues to us through it, or as an instrumental good, insofar as it leads to the last end, for this is the reward of virtue. On the other hand, the honourable calls forth, not just desire as if it were only an extrinsic object or end to be possessed for ourselves, but also a certain kind of recognition: ‘honour is an attestation to someone’s excellence’.<sup>72</sup> As such, it falls within the order of the good, insofar as it is something that we desire for

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<sup>70</sup> This means that beauty is not limited to the super-addition of accidental being, because the harmony between substance and accidents is rooted in the more fundamental harmony between the substantial being a thing has through the unity of its essence and existence, which Aquinas expresses through the Augustinian notes of *species* and *mode*.

<sup>71</sup> *De virtutibus* q. 1, a. 9 ad 16: ‘Ad hoc autem quod aliquid sit bonum simpliciter, requiritur quod sit totaliter perfectum; sicut ad hoc quod aliquid sit pulchrum simpliciter requiritur quod in nulla parte sit aliqua deformitas vel turpitudine.’

<sup>72</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 1 ad 3.

ourselves, but it can also be categorised within another order, insofar as the virtue or excellence we encounter in others calls forth our giving of honour. As any experience of a particularly virtuous action of another will show, when we encounter this spiritual beauty, we do not simply desire it for ourselves, but we also stand back in reverent appreciation:

Reverence is not the same as honour: but on the one hand it is the primary motive for showing honour, in so far as one man honours another out of the reverence he has for him; and on the other hand, it is the end of honour, in so far as a person is honoured in order that he may be held in reverence by others.<sup>73</sup>

In other words, we encounter the honourable as beautiful when we simply reverence its own intrinsic excellence as fitting to the one in whom it is found, regardless of how we might possess it for ourselves.

Following Augustine, Aquinas reserves the category of the honourable for spiritual or intelligible beauty, as opposed to sensible beauty: 'many things are beautiful to the eye, which it would be hardly proper to call *honesta*.'<sup>74</sup> Whilst this is strictly true, I want to suggest that the category of the honourable can be analogically extended to the intrinsic excellence or beauty of all things. Indeed, Aquinas explicitly states that the division of the good into the useful, the pleasant, and the honourable might appear to belong only to human goodness, but viewed from a more universal perspective it also applies to the good as such, and so we can conclude that this division must be co-extensive with being, as the good is.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, as we saw above, the division of the good is not according to different things, but different aspects, so

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<sup>73</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 103, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>74</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

<sup>75</sup> 'The extension of this division to the good as such is important for the beautiful because Thomas, following Alexander of Hales, identifies the beautiful with the primary good, the *bonum honestum*. The beautiful pleases, not because it has an instrumental function, but because it is in itself good.' Aertsen, 'Beauty in the Middle Ages,' 92.

that any instance of the good, human or otherwise, can fall under the aspects of the useful, the pleasant, and the honourable, for these three concur in the same subject.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, Aquinas also argues that ‘glory’ is the effect of honour, because when someone is honoured or praised they acquire splendour (*clarus*) in the eyes of others.<sup>77</sup> Well, if God is said to be beautiful because he is the cause of the harmony and brightness of the universe,<sup>78</sup> and if creatures lead to the knowledge of God chiefly because of their beauty,<sup>79</sup> then it seems to me that we can speak of the beauty of all things calling forth a response from the human soul that is analogous to the honour that we give to the virtue of others; namely, a kind of reverential appreciation for the intrinsic excellence of creatures, inasmuch as this beauty points to the beauty of God (who is ‘universally perfect’, because he super-eminently contains the nobility found in every genus) thereby giving him splendour in the eyes of others as the first cause of all.<sup>80</sup> As such, reverential honour can be given to that which is intrinsically good, whether that is human virtue, or simply the beauty of a tree, for instance, which has attained to a certain actuality that is befitting to its nature, that is, to a certain ‘measure’ or ‘mode’ of the plenitude of being that is commensurate with the form or ‘species’ to which it belongs.

Now, Aquinas is aware that, by making a connection with the beautiful, he has introduced a certain tension into his account of the honourable. On the surface, it would appear impossible for the two to be the same, for the *ratio* of the honourable is taken from the appetite, to which it is desirable for its own sake (*per se*), whereas the beautiful relates to vision, in relation to which it has the aspect of the pleasant.<sup>81</sup> In other words, if the beautiful is a species of the good, to which division of the good

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<sup>76</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 3.

<sup>77</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2 ad 2.

<sup>78</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

<sup>79</sup> *STh Supplement*, q. 91, a. 3.

<sup>80</sup> As we noted above, someone can be honoured not because of their own virtue, but because of the dignity that comes with representing God in some manner. See *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2 ad 2. Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 63, a. 4; q. 103, a. 2 ad 2. Cf. Psalm 19.1 (KJV): ‘The heavens declare the glory of God’.

<sup>81</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2 obj. 1.

does it belong, the pleasant or the honourable? However, as we have argued, the beautiful and the honourable are not exclusively contained in the appetible order as the object of desire. Therefore, Aquinas replies by explaining that the object which moves the appetite is the ‘apprehended good’ (*bonum apprehensum*), and furthermore, that which appears in the apprehension itself as beautiful, can be ‘accepted’ (*accipitur*) as something fitting and good (*conveniens et bonum*) in relation to the appetite – which is why Dionysius says in Book IV of *On the Divine Names* that the beautiful and the good are loved by all – and so, the honourable itself, according as it has spiritual beauty, can be ‘rendered’ (*redditur*) as an object of desire.<sup>82</sup> The distinction being made here is illuminated further by an important passage in which Aquinas explicitly argues that the *rationem appetibilis*, that is, that which the good ‘adds’ to being, does not belong to the proper *ratio* of the beautiful.

He makes this point as he discusses the traditional ‘appropriation’ of certain predicates to the divine persons of the Trinity in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.<sup>83</sup> In particular, the question under consideration is whether it is fitting for Hilary of Poitiers to appropriate the terms ‘eternity’, ‘species’, and ‘use’, respectively, to the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>84</sup> Aquinas raises an objection to the appropriation of *species* – which, following Augustine, he takes to be synonymous with ‘beauty’ (*pulchritudo*)<sup>85</sup> – to the person of the Son. The objection states that, according to Book IV of *On the Divine Names*, Dionysius says that the ‘beautiful’ and the ‘good’ are consequent upon each other – in other words, they are ‘identical’, ‘convertible’ and ‘co-extensive’ *secundum rem* – and so it seems that both are desired by all. Hence, they are closely related according to their names in ancient

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<sup>82</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2 ad 1.

<sup>83</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1. Cf. *STh* I, q. 39, aa. 7, 8. See Gilles Emery, O.P., *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. 312-37.

<sup>84</sup> We will examine the main body of this article at length in the next chapter.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. *De 108 articulis* 57: ‘Augustinus autem speciem interpretatur pulchritudinem.’ In this text, Aquinas argues that the Son is the *species* of the Father as his image and splendour. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 339.

Greek, since the good is called *kalos* and the beautiful *kallos*. However, goodness is not appropriated to the Son, but to the Holy Spirit, and so neither can *species* or beauty be appropriated to the Son.<sup>86</sup> However, Aquinas replies that beauty (*pulchritudo*) does not have the ‘aspect of desirableness’ (*rationem appetibilis*), except insofar as it assumes or ‘puts on’ (*induit*) the character of the good (*rationem boni*), for in this way the true is desirable, but according to its proper character, the beautiful consists in ‘brightness’ (*claritas*) and ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*), as Dionysius says, and also ‘magnitude’ (*magnitudo*), as Aristotle says, all three of which have a likeness with that which is proper to the Son.<sup>87</sup>

This passage marks a decisive distinction between the beautiful and the good *secundum rationem*. The very thing which the good ‘adds’ to being, namely, the *rationem appetibilis*, is explicitly excluded from the proper *ratio* of the beautiful.<sup>88</sup> As such, it cannot be said that the beautiful is reducible to a species of the good, as if it were wholly contained within the appetible order, as merely a kind of pleasurable or desirable thing. Instead, the beautiful is said to have its own proper character, and only belongs within the appetible order of the good insofar as, like the true, it ‘puts on’ the character of the good, and is therefore ‘rendered’ or ‘accepted’ as an object of desire. As Aquinas states in his discussion of the honourable, the beautiful presents itself in a moment of apprehension, and only in a subsequent moment is it accepted as something appetible insofar as it assumes the *ratio* of the good.<sup>89</sup> As such, the honourable has a dual aspect. On the one hand, it can be apprehended in its spiritual

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<sup>86</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1 obj. 4.

<sup>87</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1 ad 4. The aspects of *consonantia* and *magnitudo* are included in the *ratio* of the beautiful in the main body of the article, which we will discuss in the next chapter. Aquinas’ argument in this reply is very similar to that of John of La Rochelle in the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, who distinguishes between the beautiful and the good by stating, on the one hand, that the former has the character of form, which can assume the character of an end, and, on the other hand, that the latter has the character of an end, which can assume the character of form. See Aertsen, ‘Beauty in the Middle Ages,’ 87-88. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 5: ‘unum et verum non habent rationem finis, sicut et bonum; et ideo nec etiam rationem appetibilis dicunt.’

<sup>88</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1; q. 16, a. 3.

<sup>89</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2 ad 1.

*beauty*, insofar as the intrinsic excellence or virtue of another is honoured and attested, in which case it is something that is recognised with reverence by someone not possessing that excellence or virtue. In this sense, the experience of beauty is not simply the good of the apprehensive powers, which take pleasure in their natural operation of apprehending sensible and intelligible things. The pleasure involved in the experience of beauty is not the pleasure in knowledge *per se*, but is pleasure in the *thing* known, that is, simply a delight in the existence of that thing. On the other hand, the honourable can be desired in its *goodness*, insofar as the excellence or virtue in question is something extrinsic that we seek to possess for ourselves. These are two distinct aspects, even if they may be *temporally* inseparable, which belong to two different orders, neither of which is simply reducible to a species of the other.

Therefore, we seem to have an initial confirmation of our conclusion in the first part, that the beautiful is a distinct general mode of being, and, like the true, precedes the good in the systematic order of the transcendentals, for the beautiful, like the true, can 'put on' the *ratio* of the good. In this case, it would be the good which 'adds' to the beautiful. However, in his discussion about the causes of love, as he considers the good and the beautiful in relation to the appetite, Aquinas states that the latter adds to the former, since the latter brings the appetite to rest *secundum quid*, by being seen, known, or apprehended, whereas the former does so *simpliciter*. In other words, it seems that the beautiful adds to the good in the appetible order, namely, a specification of the way in which the appetite is brought to rest in a particular way. As such, there seems to be a tension within Aquinas's account of the order between the beautiful and the good. Both seem to have a certain priority in relation to the other. Nevertheless, we can resolve this apparent tension by examining another text in the *Summa theologiae*, where Aquinas makes his other major comparison between the good and the beautiful.

### *The good 'adds' to the beautiful*

One of the reasons why Aquinas argues that the good presupposes the true, absolutely speaking, is because the true regards knowledge, whereas the good regards the appetite, and knowledge naturally precedes appetite.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, one of the ways in which he distinguishes between the beautiful and the good is by placing the former in the cognitive order of formal causality, and the latter in the appetitive order of final causality. For instance, he argues that, since it is that which all things desire, the good has the nature of an end, and so it belongs to the order of final causality.<sup>91</sup> In an objection he cites the saying of Dionysius that *the good is praised as the beautiful*, from which it could be argued that given that the beautiful has the aspect of a formal cause, then the good must also, if it is praised as the beautiful.<sup>92</sup> Aquinas replies, the beautiful and the good are 'identical in subject', because they are founded upon the same thing, namely, form – which is why Dionysius says that the good is praised as the beautiful – but they differ rationally.<sup>93</sup> In other words, the beautiful and the good signify the same form, but they do so under different formalities. Aquinas explains this formal distinction *anthropologically*, that is, in terms of the different powers of the soul to which the beautiful and the good relate. On the one hand, the good relates to appetite, for it is defined as 'what all desire', and so it has the aspect of an end, for appetite is like a certain movement towards a thing. On the other hand, the beautiful relates to the cognitive power, for 'beautiful' is said of 'that which pleases when seen' (*quae visa placet*).<sup>94</sup> Therefore, the beautiful consists in 'due proportion', for sense delights in

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<sup>90</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4.

<sup>91</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4.

<sup>92</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 obj. 1.

<sup>93</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1.

<sup>94</sup> 'Two things are expressed by this definition. The beautiful is that which pleases and delights, it is that in which appetite comes to rest. The beautiful is ordered to appetite and is thereby set in close relation to the good, for the good is the proper object of appetite. Yet at the same time the definition relates the beautiful to seeing, by which is not exclusively meant knowing by sense. Beauty is related to the cognitive power.' Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 337. Cf. *In De div. nomin.* IV, lect. 10 (439): 'non

duly proportioned things, as in that which is similar to them, since sense and every cognitive power are a kind of reason (*ratio*).<sup>95</sup> As he puts it in his discussion of contemplation, beauty consists in ‘brightness’ and ‘due proportion’, each of which is found in reason *radicaliter*, for both the manifesting light and the ordering of due proportion in others belong to reason.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, Aquinas concludes his reply, since knowledge (*cognitio*) occurs through assimilation, and since similitude is in respect of form, the beautiful properly pertains to the nature of the formal cause. Thus, whilst the beautiful and the good are identical in a subject, inasmuch as they are both founded upon the same form, the good has the aspect of a final cause, because it names this form as the object of the appetite, as that towards which it moves as an end, whereas the beautiful has the aspect of a formal cause, because it names this form as the object of the cognitive powers, as that by which a certain kind of knowledge (i.e., one that ‘pleases when seen’) is produced through assimilation.<sup>97</sup>

This passage has certain similarities with the comparison of the good and the beautiful in Aquinas’s discussion about the causes of love, especially inasmuch as both texts affirm that the beautiful is ‘identical’ with the good, and only differs *secundum rationem*.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, the explanation that this identity is due to their common foundation in form is a helpful clarification, a point to which we will return in the next chapter.<sup>99</sup> However, there are important differences. In the text we examined above,

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enim ideo aliquid est pulchrum quia nos illud amamus, sed quia est pulchrum et bonum ideo amatur a nobis.’

<sup>95</sup> A. van Groenewoud has highlighted the parallel text of *De anima* III, 2, in which Aquinas explicitly states that sense delights in duly proportioned things, as in things like itself, for sense is a kind of *proportio*, for it requires a proportionality between the faculty of sense and its object. Therefore, van Groenewoud argues that *ratio* ought to be translated as ‘proportion’ in the text above. See, ‘La ‘Raison’ dans la théorie Thomiste du beau.’ *Revue Thomiste* 78 (1978): 619-24, cited in Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 346.

<sup>96</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 2 ad 3.

<sup>97</sup> See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 347-49, for the similarities and differences between this text and the comparison of the good and the beautiful in *Summa theologica* I, tract. III, q. 3, a. 2, ad 1 (ed. Quaracchi I, p. 163), attributed to Alexander of Hales.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>99</sup> ‘It would seem from these two passages that any confusion about the good and the beautiful has been dispelled. Each of the two values has its own *ratio*, or sense. Furthermore, and this is of great importance, both of them are grounded in form, which means that they are grounded in actuality, in

we saw that Aquinas differentiated the beautiful and the good in terms of the different ways in which the appetite is brought to rest. This is to be expected, because that discussion takes place within the context of Aquinas's treatment of love, which he defines as the first movement of the appetite. Yet, in this passage the beautiful is differentiated from the good inasmuch as it is properly said not to belong to the appetitive order, as the good does, but instead to the order of cognition. Similarly, in his discussion about the causes of love, he argues that inasmuch as the beautiful and the good bring rest to the appetite, the former is said to 'add' to the latter, namely, a relation to the cognitive power. However, in the passage concerning the mode of causality that belongs to these two terms, Aquinas simply considers the beautiful from within the cognitive order itself, and does not state that it 'adds' to the good. Indeed, it would not make sense for him to do so, since the cognitive order precedes the appetitive order.

Indeed, the distinction that he makes between the good and the beautiful in this passage, in terms of their relation to either the appetitive or cognitive faculties, is crucial. It might even give the impression that, far from being reducible merely to a species of the good, the beautiful belongs within the order of the true. As Aquinas argues in *De veritate* 22.10, 'where there is a different formal aspect of the object, there we find a different power, even though it is the same thing which has the two formal aspects, as is the case with good and the true.'<sup>100</sup> Similarly, the way in which the beautiful and the good are distinguished in this passage is identical to the way in which Aquinas distinguishes between the true and the good. For example, he argues in his discussion about the convertibility of the true and being in the *Summa theologiae*:

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the concreteness of being. They can be identified, therefore, with *ens* or being.' Eco, *The Aesthetics*, 36. This conclusion is a little premature, since these two passages do not clarify whether the beautiful is distinct from the true. It is only as these passages are incorporated within the framework of the Augustinian triad, and the way in which it thematises the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, that we can confidently claim a distinct transcendental status for the beautiful in its identity with *ens*.

<sup>100</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 10 ad 1.

As good has the nature of what is desirable [*rationem appetibilis*], so truth is related to knowledge [*ordinem ad cognitionem*]. Now everything, in as far as it has being, so far is it knowable. Wherefore it is said in *De Anima* iii. that *the soul is in some manner all things*, through the senses and the intellect. And therefore, as good is convertible with being, so is the true. But as good adds to being the notion of desirable, so the true adds relation to the intellect.<sup>101</sup>

Thus, if the beautiful adds to the good at all, it appears that this addition is similar to that which the true adds to being, namely, the agreement of being with the cognitive power. If this is the case, then we would have to qualify Aquinas's statement that the beautiful 'adds' to the good, which he makes in his discussion about the causes of love. Indeed, as he explains further in his treatment of the convertibility of the true and the good in the *Summa theologiae*:

The will and the intellect mutually include one another: for the intellect understands the will, and the will wills the intellect to understand. So then, among things directed to the object of the will, are comprised also those that belong to the intellect; and conversely. Whence in the order of things desirable [*ordine appetibilium*], good stands as the universal, and the true as the particular; whereas in the order of intelligible things [*ordine intelligibilium*] the converse is the case. From the fact, then, that the true is a kind of good, it follows that the good is prior in the order of things desirable; but not that it is prior absolutely [*simpliciter*].<sup>102</sup>

In other words, the true and the good belong to their own respective orders, as the universal that contains all within that order. Yet, because they are convertible, they also belong in the order of one another, as a particular within the universal. That is, the true is a particular kind of good, and the good is a particular kind of the true. Therefore, the true is distinguished from the good in terms of its proper character, but it can assume the character of the good, insofar as it is related to as an appetible thing, and, if it does so, the good is prior to the true *secundum quid*, but not *simpliciter*.

This comparison is particularly illuminating in relation to Aquinas's differentiation between the beautiful and the good in his discussion about the causes

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<sup>101</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 3.

<sup>102</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4 ad 1. Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 19, a. 3 ad 1: 'bonum sub ratione boni, idest appetibilis, per prius pertinet ad voluntatem quam ad rationem. Sed tamen per prius pertinet ad rationem sub ratione veri, quam ad voluntatem sub ratione appetibilis, quia appetitus voluntatis non potest esse de bono, nisi prius a ratione apprehendatur.'

of love. The beautiful is distinguished from the good because the latter pleases the appetite *simpliciter*, whereas the former does so in a particular way, namely, in relation to the cognitive powers. In other words, in the *ordine appetibilium* the good is the universal, which brings the appetite to rest *simpliciter*, whereas the beautiful is the particular, which brings the appetite to rest *secundum quid*. As such, in the order of things appetible, the good is universal and prior to the beautiful, and the latter adds something particular to the former, namely, a relation to the cognitive power, inasmuch as it is pleasing to this power. However, as that which can assume or ‘put on’ the character of the good, the beautiful precedes the good *simpliciter*. In other words, absolutely speaking, the good ‘adds’ to the beautiful. As Aquinas puts it in the key text of *De veritate* 22.1 ad 12:

By the very fact of tending to good a thing at the same time tends to the beautiful [...] It tends to the beautiful inasmuch as it is proportioned [*modificatum*] and specified [*specificatum*] in itself. These notes are included in the essential character of good, but good adds a relationship [*ordine*] of what is perfective in regard to other things.<sup>103</sup>

Aquinas’s use of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order* confirms what is implicit in his wider metaphysical thought, the good adds to the beautiful.<sup>104</sup> The beautiful refers to the *intrinsic* reality of a being in some way, and the good adds to this the notion of an *extrinsic* relation, whereby the intrinsic perfection of one being can be perfective of another.

However, as Aquinas distinguishes the beautiful from the good in his discussion about the different modes of causality belonging to these two, there is a sense in which he closely associates the beautiful with the character of the true, namely, insofar as it relates to the cognitive power and the order of formal causality. Likewise, he explicitly excludes the *rationem appetibilis* from the beautiful in his commentary on Lombard’s *Sentences*, but this argument is made in the context of a

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<sup>103</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 12.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Because it has the character of being “perfect” and “final”, the “good” is last in the order of the transcendentals.’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 291.

discussion in which Aquinas follows Augustine in equating beauty with *species*.<sup>105</sup> In terms of the Augustinian triad, this signifies the form of a thing,<sup>106</sup> and is that by which all things are knowable,<sup>107</sup> and so it is the aspect of a being from which the note of truth arises.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, beauty or *species* is appropriated to the Son, like the true, but unlike the good, which, in turn, is appropriated to the Holy Spirit instead.<sup>109</sup> As Aquinas explains in *De veritate*, ‘if truth is taken properly in whatever pertains to God, it is predicated essentially; yet it is appropriated to the person of the Son, as are also art and all else pertaining to intellect.’<sup>110</sup> This might seem to indicate that the beautiful is presupposed by the good only because the former belongs within the order of the true, and is not a distinct transcendental itself. In other words, it might be that the beautiful is conceptually distinct from the good only because it is conceptually identical with the true.

However, there are two important ways in which Aquinas’s thought resists this reduction of the beautiful to the true. First, the beautiful is defined as that which *pleases when seen*. As with the true, there is certainly a moment of apprehension or cognition in the experience of beauty; it is that which pleases when *seen* or *known*. But there is also an appetitive moment too, since it is that which *pleases* when seen or known. Indeed, Aquinas argues that pleasure belongs to the appetitive order of the good, and not to the cognitive order of the true. Granted, pleasure is a perfection of operation, such that the operation that is most perfect is most pleasant, and that the most pleasant operation is that belonging to a well-disposed sense or intellect in relation to the best of the objects that fall under sense or intellect.<sup>111</sup> However, Aquinas also explains:

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<sup>105</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1: ‘et species, id est pulchritudo quam dicit esse in imagine, id est in Filio, qui proprie imago est’.

<sup>106</sup> *STh* I q. 5, a. 5.

<sup>107</sup> All creatures are *cognoscibilis per speciem* (*De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6 s.c. 4).

<sup>108</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 10 ad s.c. 3.

<sup>109</sup> *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8.

<sup>110</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 7.

<sup>111</sup> *In X Ethic.*, lect. 6 (2025-2026).

Pleasure indeed can be felt only in the activity of the senses or intellect, for creatures lacking perception cannot experience pleasure. Nevertheless, pleasure is identical neither with the activity of the intellect nor with the activity of the senses. Pleasure pertains rather to the appetitive part.<sup>112</sup>

This would seem to bring the experience of the beautiful back within the order of the good, which pertains to the appetite, its movement of desire, and its rest in the experience of pleasure. In which case, the beautiful seems to occupy a middle position between the true and the good. It shares in aspects relating to both orders, but it is also sharply distinguished from each of them in certain ways. The beautiful is distinguished from the good, since it pertains to cognition, and does not have the *ratio* of appetibility or desirability, and also from the true, because it involves the experience of pleasure, which is contingent upon the cognitive powers, but does not directly pertain to them. Accordingly, it does not seem to fit neatly within either the order of the true or the order of the good, but appears to be a strange hybrid of two. This strange middle position between cognition and appetite is precisely the way in which Aquinas characterises the experience of love, and we will explore this further in connection with the anthropological dimensions of the beautiful in the final chapter of this study. In particular, we will outline the particular nature of the *pleasure* involved in the experience of the beautiful, as something quite different from that pleasure that we experience in the acquisition of the good.

Secondly, in more ontological terms, the key passage from *De veritate* 22.1 ad 12 illustrates that the beautiful is not reducible to the true, but a distinct transcendental: it is constituted by the Augustinian notes of *species* and *mode*, and so it follows upon the true, which is constituted by *species* alone, and precedes the good, which is constituted by *species*, *mode*, and *order*. In fact, those passages in which Aquinas seems to reduce the beautiful to *species* or truth offer further confirmation of this conclusion, for it is in these contexts that Aquinas enumerates the proper *ratio* of the beautiful most clearly. Therefore, our task in the next chapter is to fully analyse

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<sup>112</sup> *In X Ethic.*, lect. 8 (2053-2054). Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 34, a. 2 ad 3: 'hoc modo omnia appetunt delectationem, sicut et bonum, cum delectatio sit quies appetitus in bono.'

this *ratio* of the beautiful, and to situate it within the framework of the Augustinian triad, in order to firmly establish the distinct transcendental status of the beautiful within the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE RATIO OF BEAUTY: BRIGHTNESS AND HARMONY

In the previous chapter, we established that the beautiful is not merely reducible to a species of the good, but rather that the two transcendentals are fully distinct and that each has its own proper *ratio*. Furthermore, despite the fact that Aquinas occasionally states that the beautiful ‘adds’ to the good, our analysis revealed that this is only the case within the appetible order, in which the good is prior to the beautiful as the universal to the particular, for the beautiful, like the true, can ‘assume’ the *ratio* of the good, and be ‘rendered’ as an appetible object, for the true, the beautiful, and the good are identical, convertible, and co-extensive. However, in absolute terms, the beautiful is prior to the good, for the former is composed of the Augustinian notes of *species* and *mode*, which are included in the latter, which, in turn, is constituted by the cumulative addition of the note of *order*, such that the essence of the good consists in the fullness of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*, and therefore it comes at the end of the list in the systematic order of the transcendentals.

Our task in this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, we must demonstrate that the above conclusion is consistent with Aquinas’s preferred definition of the *ratio* of the beautiful in terms of the Dionysian dual formulation of ‘brightness’ (*claritas*) and ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*). That is, we must demonstrate that the true is constituted by brightness (i.e., *species*), and, crucially, that the beautiful is constituted by the cumulative addition of harmony (i.e., *mode*) to brightness. On the other hand, we have argued that there are two corresponding levels within the cumulative order of the transcendentals, such that *res-unum-aliquid* is the presupposed basis, respectively, upon which the soul relates to being in the orders of *verum-pulchrum-bonum*. In other words, what ‘thing’ (*res*) adds to being is taken up into the relational register of the

'true' (*verum*), what 'one' (*unum*) adds is taken up into the relational register of the 'beautiful' (*pulchrum*), and what 'something' (*aliquid*) adds is taken up into the relational register of the 'good' (*bonum*). Therefore, in this chapter we shall also have to highlight the ways in which Aquinas connects what the beautiful adds to the true, namely, 'harmony' (*consonantia*), to the notion of *unity*.

In this chapter, we shall approach this task in two stages. First, I will examine two fundamentally important passages, in which Aquinas outlines that in which the *ratio* of beauty consists, as he discusses the subject of the Trinitarian 'appropriations'. Secondly, I will develop our findings in the first stage by turning to Aquinas's commentary on Book IV of Dionysius's *On the Divine Names*. This text provides the greatest insights into his understanding of the *ratio* of beauty, and our analysis of this text will confirm our position outlined just above. In what follows, I will demonstrate that the notion of 'brightness' (*claritas*) sufficiently describes the *ratio* of the true for Aquinas, which will also confirm our conclusion that the beautiful is constituted by immediate addition to the true, namely, that it, like the true, is constituted by 'brightness', to which it also adds the notion of 'harmony' (*consonantia*), a concept that particularly presupposes that which the 'one' (*unum*) adds to being.

However, by the end of this chapter, we will not have fully articulated that in which the *ratio* of the beautiful consists, for it is a relational transcendental, and so, it necessarily involves a unique relation of the soul to the harmony of being. As such, it will be our task in the final chapter to complete our analysis by turning to Aquinas's anthropology of love, which we will argue is the soul's relation to the harmony and beauty of being.

### *Beauty and the Trinitarian 'appropriations'*

The Trinity of divine persons is essentially one and undivided in the immutable and infinite perfection of the divine simplicity, and so everything that can be predicated

of the divine essence belongs equally to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, Aquinas argues that for the manifestation of the faith, which is revealed by supernatural grace, an 'essential attribute' can be *appropriated* to a particular person of the holy and undivided Trinity insofar as it has a similitude with what is proper to that person. For example, the things which belong to the intellect, such as wisdom and truth, are appropriated to the Son, because he proceeds from the Father by way of intellect as the Word.<sup>1</sup> Such appropriations are not the sufficient ground upon which these supernaturally revealed doctrines are founded, but they do manifest the fittingness of *Sacra Doctrina*.

Now, for the medieval thinkers, the two main authorities for the tradition of 'appropriating' certain essential attributes to the divine persons of the Trinity were Augustine and Hilary of Poitiers.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, some of Aquinas's most important statements about the *ratio* of beauty are found in his two major discussions concerning whether it is fitting for Hilary to appropriate 'eternity', 'species', and 'use', respectively, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> As we observed in the previous chapter, in this context, Aquinas follows Augustine's interpretation of 'species' as being synonymous with 'beauty' (*pulchritudo*), but before we turn to his defence of its appropriation to the Son, it will be instructive to examine his treatment of the appropriation of *eternity* to the Father, and *use* to the Holy Spirit.

On the one hand, Aquinas defends the appropriation of 'eternity' to the Father in connection with two elements included in that notion.<sup>4</sup> First, eternity is the principle of every duration insofar as it is the 'first measure' (*prima mensura*), and so from eternity flows both aeviternity and time.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, it has a likeness with that

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<sup>1</sup> *STh* I, q. 32, a. 1; q. 39, aa. 7 & 8. Cf. Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 408-15; Norman Kretzmann, 'Trinity and Transcendentals,' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement*, ed. R. Feenstra and C. Platinga (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 79-109.

<sup>2</sup> Hilary, *De trinitate* II, c. 1 (ed. P. Smulders, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 62, 38); Augustine, *De trinitate* VI, 10 (ed. W.J. Mountain, CCL 50, 241).

<sup>3</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1; *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Aquinas describes *aeviternity* as a 'mean' between eternity and time. See *STh* I, q. 10, a. 5.

which is proper to the Father, insofar as he is the principle of both the Son through generation, and of the Holy Spirit with the Son through common spiration. Secondly, the notion of eternity includes the privation of its own principle, and so it agrees with the ‘innascibility’ of the Father, insofar as he is not from any principle, but is the source of the divine nature. As Aquinas puts it in the parallel to this passage, ‘eternity’ has a similitude to the Father because he is a ‘principle without a principle.’<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Aquinas similarly defends the appropriation of ‘use’ to the Holy Spirit in connection with two elements included in that notion.<sup>7</sup> First, he argues that ‘to use’ is to assume something into the faculty of the will, and in this way it belongs to the Holy Spirit insofar as he is *love*, for, as Augustine says, love, delight, happiness or beatitude in the Trinity *is* the Holy Spirit, the sweetness of the begetter and the begotten.<sup>8</sup> This connection is predicated upon Aquinas’s position that love is the root and first principle of all movements of the will and appetite, so ‘use’ is connected with the Holy Spirit, to whom is appropriated ‘love’ and all that pertains to the will.<sup>9</sup> Secondly, the notion of use also contains the idea of one thing being ordered to another, and this ‘order’ (*ordo*) belongs to the Holy Spirit, insofar as the very love which is the Holy Spirit is not only an order existing between the Father and the Son, but also overflows to all creatures with immense generosity and abundance, and in this way the name ‘gift’ belongs to the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

Most relevant to our immediate argument is Aquinas’s treatment of the appropriation of *species* or ‘beauty’ (*pulchritudo*) to the Son, the image of the Father.<sup>11</sup> He cites a particularly important statement of Dionysius in Book IV of *On the Divine*

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<sup>6</sup> *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8: ‘Usus ergo quo pater et filius se invicem fruuntur, convenit cum proprio spiritus sancti, in quantum est amor.’

<sup>9</sup> See *STh* I, q. 20, a. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8: ‘Usus vero quo nos fruimur Deo, similitudinem habet cum proprio spiritus sancti, in quantum est donum.’ Aquinas’s explanation of the notions of *eternity* and *use* suggests strong connections with the Augustinian notes of *mode* and *order*, respectively, which we will explore in the conclusion of this study, as we consider the theological implications of our argument.

<sup>11</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1.

*Names*, namely, that two things concur in the *ratio* of beauty, ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*) and ‘brightness’ (*claritas*), for God is said to be the cause of all beauty insofar as he is the cause of harmony and brightness, just as we call someone beautiful if they have ‘proportionate members’ and ‘splendorous colour’. Furthermore, to these two, Aquinas adds a third from Aristotle, namely, that beauty is not found except in a ‘large body’ (*magno corpore*), such that small people can be called ‘commensurate’ (*commensurati*) and ‘comely’ (*formosi*), but not beautiful. We will consider each of these according to Aquinas’s order of explanation.

First, there is perfect ‘harmony’ insofar as the Son is the perfect *image* of the Father, for the Son is ‘equal’ to and ‘like’ (*aequalis et similis*) the Father, without any inequality or unlikeness, such that, as Augustine says, there is a ‘wonderful fittingness’ between the two, which is the *prima aequalitas* and *prima similitudo*. Aquinas’s use of the terms ‘equal’ and ‘like’ in connection with the notion of harmony is interesting, especially in light of our discussion of these terms in chapter one. We saw that the term ‘identical’ signifies that one thing is the same as another thing in terms of *substance*, whereas the terms ‘like’ and ‘equal’ signify the unity or agreement of two things in terms of *quality* and *quantity*, respectively. In other words, the identity of two things indicates their *substantial* agreement, and their similarity and equality indicate their *accidental* agreement. Of course, there is no composition of substance and accidents in the divine nature,<sup>12</sup> just as beauty and harmony belong to the divine nature essentially, and not only to that which is proper to the Son. However, it seems as though Aquinas is arguing that the harmony between two created things in terms of their accidental being – that is, their harmony or agreement in every respect, and not just in terms of the common species to which they belong – is analogous to the harmony by which the Son perfectly images and represents the Father without any dissimilarity or inequality. It would seem that this point is confirmed by Aquinas’s

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<sup>12</sup> *STh* I, q. 3, a. 6.

argument for why 'magnitude', another of beauty's preconditions, belongs to that which is proper to the Son.

Secondly, insofar as he is the true Son he has the 'perfect nature' of the Father, and so he has the 'magnitude' which consists in the *perfection of the divine nature*, which is why Augustine says that in the Son there is the 'greatest life'. The precise meaning of this statement can be illustrated by Aquinas's discussion of the 'equality' of the divine persons in *Summa theologiae* I, 42.1. He raises an objection that it would seem to be unbecoming to predicate equality of the divine persons, for this notion signifies those things that are one in quantity, which cannot apply to the divine persons, who all share the same incorporeal divine nature.<sup>13</sup> In his reply, Aquinas distinguishes between the 'quantity of virtue' (*quantitas virtutis*) and 'dimensive quantity' (*quantitas dimensiva*). The latter is found only in corporeal things, and so the equality of two material beings would refer to their agreement in magnitude, as a measure of more or less, with regard to size, place, or time. By contrast, the 'quantity of virtue' is a measure of the *perfection* of some nature or form, whereby we refer to different forms or natures as being more or less in terms of the intensity of their perfection.<sup>14</sup> In other words, although we properly speak of the magnitude of corporeal things in terms of their dimensive quantity, nevertheless, by extension, we can also speak of the magnitude of spiritual or intelligible realities in terms of the relative perfection of their forms and natures. In this way we would say that spiritual natures are of a higher magnitude than merely corporeal natures, for the former have a greater dignity or perfection than the latter. Thus, when Aquinas says that small people are not beautiful, it seems that he has in mind the idea that there is some perfection of human nature that is lacking to them, that is, that they are not the size that is fitting or proportionate to the dignity of human nature. However, this must be counterbalanced by statements he makes

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<sup>13</sup> *STh* I, q. 42, a. 1 obj. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *STh* I, q. 42, a. 1 ad 1. Cf *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 3, a. 1: 'Si autem consideretur quantum ad complementum perfectionis ipsius naturae divinae, erit magnitudo.'

elsewhere that beauty varies from one person to another, such that people of all shapes and sizes can be beautiful.<sup>15</sup>

In any case, what principally concerns us is the meaning of magnitude in terms of ‘quantity of virtue’, as a signification of the perfection of a particular nature. In this case, magnitude is proper to the Son because he is a true Son, so perfectly conforms to the Father as one who shares perfectly in the same nature. That is, the same dignity or rank of perfection in form is shared by the Father and the Son, because they have the same *substance* or nature. Thus, whilst harmony is proper to the Son because he is ‘like’ and ‘equal’ to the Father in every way – something that we characterised above as analogous to the agreement of two created things in terms of the harmony of their *accidental* being – magnitude is proper to the Son because he is ‘identical’ with the Father in substance and nature, and so he is as great as the Father in terms of his dignity and perfection. In this way, magnitude functions in a relative or comparative way, in the sense that the Son is said to have magnitude by virtue of the divine nature which is greater than all other natures. With this in mind, we can observe a subtle change in Aquinas’s account of the *ratio* of beauty in the parallel to this text in the *Summa theologiae*, to which we will turn in a moment.

Thirdly, insofar as the Son is the Father’s perfect word, he has the ‘brightness’ (*claritas*) which ‘irradiates’ over all things, and in which all things are ‘resplendent’. What Aquinas has in mind here is the idea that the Son, as Word, is the fullness of the divine knowledge by which God creates, such that the forms or *species* of all creatures, by which they participate in a likeness of the divine essence, are found pre-eminently in the Son, who proceeds by way of knowledge from the Father. In other words, the form of a creature is an intelligible brightness which shines forth from God as from its cause, and it is therefore a creaturely and imperfect participation in the eternal procession of the Word from the divine intellect.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For example, *In Psalmos* 44.2; *De Anima* II, 8. Cf. Eco, *The Aesthetics*, 102.

<sup>16</sup> See *STh* I, q. 15, aa 1-3; *De Pot.*, q. 2, a. 6. Gregory T. Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), esp. 191-243.

Importantly, Aquinas concludes his treatment of the appropriation of beauty to the Son in his commentary on the *Sentences* with a brief examination of Augustine's threefold consideration of 'harmony' (*consonantia*), which, he argues, encapsulates his previous discussion. First, there is the harmony of the Son with the Father, to whom he is 'equal' and 'like' in all things. This point is very similar to that made by Aquinas in relation to the Son as the perfect *image* of the Father. Secondly, there is the harmony of the Son with himself, insofar as all of his attributes are not different, but *one*, for to be, to live, to be wise, and so forth, are not different attributes, but the same thing in the simplicity of the divine essence. Again, this is a similar point to that made in relation to the idea of *magnitude*, which concerned the dignity of the perfection belonging to the divine nature. Thirdly, there is the harmony of the Son with created things, for the formal characters (*rationes*) of all things are within him, and are *one* in him, just as he is *one* with the Father. Once more, this is a very similar argument to Aquinas's attribution of *brightness* to the Son, the Father's perfect Word which radiates over all and in which all shine forth.

Two things are worth emphasising about the manner in which Aquinas concludes his treatment of the *ratio* of beauty in this text. First, he employs the category of harmony (*consonantia*) in order to re-capitulate the ways in which beauty can be 'appropriated' to the divine Son. At the very least, this implies a certain privileging of this notion in relation to the intrinsic essence of beauty, and it might even imply that this is the defining feature of that intrinsic essence. Secondly, in Aquinas's explanation of harmony in relation to the beauty of the divine Son, the notion of unity is integral. The Son has harmony with the Father, because they are one in terms of their equality and similarity, he has harmony within himself, for his attributes are not many but one in the simplicity of the divine essence, and he has harmony with created things, for the formal natures of all things are in him as one, just as he is one with the Father.<sup>17</sup> In

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<sup>17</sup> This unity and harmony of attributes in God is the fundamental and intrinsic reason why we can say that he is beautiful according to his essence.

other words, this gives an early indication that harmony is the unique addition to being to which the beautiful corresponds, and in such a way that it especially presupposes the transcendental notion of the 'one' (*unum*).

Aquinas re-visits the question of the Trinitarian 'appropriations' in *Summa theologiae* I, 39.8, where he states that the appropriation of 'eternity' to the Father, 'species' to the Son, and 'use' to the Holy Spirit, applies to God according to an absolute consideration of his being (*esse*). Not much is added to what we have said already, in terms of his discussion concerning what is appropriated to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Again, most important to our present argument is his statement that *species* or beauty has a likeness to the Son, because it consists in three requirements: '*integrity* or *perfection*, since those things which are impaired are by the very fact ugly; *due proportion* or *harmony*; and lastly *brightness* or *clarity*, whence things are called beautiful which have a bright colour.'<sup>18</sup> First, 'integrity' or 'perfection' has a likeness to the property of the Son, inasmuch as he truly and perfectly possesses the nature of the Father, which is why Augustine says that he has supreme and primal life. Secondly, 'proportion' or 'harmony' agrees with the property of the Son, inasmuch as he is the express image of the Father – and an image is said to be beautiful if it perfectly represents even an ugly thing – which is why Augustine says that there is a wonderful fittingness and prime equality between the two. Thirdly, 'brightness' agrees with the property of the Son, inasmuch as he is the Word, which is indeed light, and the splendour of the intellect, which is why Augustine says that he is the perfect word from which nothing is lacking, the art of the omnipotent God.

This account is largely the same as the earlier treatment in the commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. The Dionysian dual formula of *claritas* and *consonantia* is present again, with the slight difference that 'harmony' is now mentioned as being synonymous with 'due proportion'.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Aquinas's explanation of

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<sup>18</sup> *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8.

<sup>19</sup> The original meaning of *consonantia* signifies a proportion between sounds (e.g., *De anima* I, 9; *ScG* II, 64 [4]; *In De div nomin.*, IV, lect., 8 [385]). The word itself means to 'sound together' (e.g., *In De*

brightness connects this notion even more explicitly with the cognitive order of truth, for the divine Son is said to have brightness because he is the Word, that is, the light and splendour of the intellect, the art of the omnipotent God.<sup>20</sup> This would seem to confirm our proposal that brightness (*claritas*) belongs to truth and beauty, as that which essentially defines the former, and also as that by which the latter is constituted through inclusion and the cumulative addition of the notion of harmony (*consonantia*).

However, the major difference between the two accounts of the appropriation of beauty to the Son consists in the fact that the Aristotelian condition of ‘magnitude’ has now been replaced with the idea of ‘integrity’ or ‘perfection’.<sup>21</sup> As we saw above, magnitude signifies the idea of a greater or lesser rank of dignity or perfection belonging to a certain form or nature, and so in some sense this is not much of a change. Indeed, integrity and perfection are said to belong to what is proper to the Son for the same reason as magnitude, namely, because he truly and perfectly has in himself the same nature as the Father. As such, the magnitude of the divine Son consists in the *perfection* of the divine nature, which he shares with the Father. Likewise, a very similar idea is expressed negatively by the term *integritas*.<sup>22</sup>

However, there is a subtle shift in emphasis in the change from magnitude to integrity or perfection. As we noted above, the term magnitude has a *relative* signification, insofar as it is a comparative term indicating the intensity of perfection

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*div nomin.*, XI, lect., 2 [908]: ‘Nihil enim est aliud harmonia, quam concors consonantia.’) However, the term can be extended to visual harmony too, as in the proportion between colours or shapes of a bodily being (e.g., *ScG* II, 64 [4]). Moreover, the meaning of harmony is extended to every kind of proportion or agreement between things (e.g., *In De Anima* I. 9). Cf. *In De div nomin.*, IV, lect., 8 (385): ‘proportiones autem in sonis vocantur harmoniae et, per quamdam similitudinem, proportiones convenientes quarumcumque rerum harmoniae dicuntur.’ Therefore, it can be a condition for transcendental beauty, because proportions can be found in every category of being, even between potency and act. See *In II Sent.*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 4 ad 3; *STh* I, q. 12, a. 1 ad 4; *ScG* II, 53. Cf. Kovach, ‘Transcendentality’, 83-84.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 7: ‘Unde in divinis si veritas proprie accipiatur, essentialiter dicitur; tamen appropriatur personae filii, sicut ars et cetera quae ad intellectum pertinent.’

<sup>21</sup> ‘The reference to Aristotle plays no further role in his work; in *Summa theologiae* I,39.8 the third characteristic has disappeared and been replaced by “perfection.”’ Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 339.

<sup>22</sup> *In De div nomin.*, II, lect., 2 (115): ‘Integrum autem et perfectum idem videntur esse; differunt tamen ratione: nam perfectum videntur dici aliquid in attingendo ad propriam naturam, integrum autem per remotionem diminutionis.’

belonging to a given nature, whereby it is compared to other natures in terms of more and less. As such, according to the 'quantity of virtue', spiritual natures are unequal to corporeal natures, insofar as they have a higher or greater dignity and perfection, that is, they have a greater magnitude. By contrast, the terms 'perfection' and 'integrity' have a more *absolute* force, in the sense that whilst a tree may have a lesser relative magnitude than a human being, for instance, insofar as it enjoys a less intense mode of dignity and being, nevertheless, a tree has a perfection and integrity of its own according to which it attains to its own proper nature, which will never attain to the magnitude of human nature, but does not imply any intrinsic imperfection in the tree itself. In other words, a tree can never attain to the dignity of human nature, but it can be perfect in terms of attaining the proper end of its own nature. We might say that perfection is more of an *analogical* term than magnitude. This is an important change in terms of the *ratio* of beauty, since it means that all things can be beautiful according to the perfection that is proper to their own nature, and not simply by being more perfect than the beings of other natures. What this means is that whilst natures of greater magnitude will be more beautiful than those of lesser magnitude, those of a lesser magnitude will still possess their own beauty insofar as they attain to the perfection and end of their own natures.

Now, Aertsen argues that this triad does not have an absolute force or canonical meaning, since *integrity*, *perfection*, and *magnitude* are not mentioned in any other text as conditions of the beautiful. Elsewhere, Aquinas only ever mentions the Dionysian dual formula of *brightness* and *harmony* or *due proportion*.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, he concludes that the first condition of the beautiful, namely, *perfection*, is of a different kind than the other two, 'a generic condition that binds the beautiful to the good as good', since the beautiful pleases because it is perfect.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, he also argues that in all of his texts, Aquinas merely enumerates the conditions of beauty, placing them side by side

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<sup>23</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 338. See *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2; q. 180, a. 2 ad 3, for example.

<sup>24</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 354-55.

in such a way that clarifies neither their mutual relationship, nor the *a posteriori* definition of the beautiful as that which pleases when seen.<sup>25</sup>

On the one hand, Aertsen is correct that perfection is a generic condition not exclusive to the *ratio* of beauty. As we have seen in previous chapters, Aquinas argues that *insofar as it consists in perfection*, the essence of the good consists in the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*, which specifies the threefold 'mode of perfection' by which all things are formally constituted as beings and as good.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the good denotes the idea of the perfect, which is desirable, so that which is ultimately perfect is called good *simpliciter*.<sup>27</sup> However, on the other hand, this does not bind the beautiful to the good as good, as Aertsen argues, since the notion of perfection does not pertain to the good exclusively. For instance, Aquinas argues that both the true and the good have the *ratio* of that which perfects or of perfections.<sup>28</sup> By contrast, the 'one' does not include the idea of perfection in its *ratio*, but only that of indivision, and so we can conclude that perfection is the generic basis of all the *relational* transcendentals. The good denotes the idea of ultimate perfection because it is last in the cumulative order of the transcendentals, therefore, it contains the perfections of being signified by the other relational transcendentals, and adds its own final note of perfection as the ultimate. But the notion of perfection is not restricted to the good. Furthermore, our analysis in the previous chapter demonstrated that the beautiful cannot be reduced to merely a species of the good. The *ratio* of the beautiful may include the idea of perfection, just as the good and the true do, but this does not bind the beautiful to the good *as good*.

As regards Aertsen's argument that Aquinas simply enumerates the conditions of beauty without indicating their mutual relationship, or the way in which they relate to the definition of the beautiful as that which pleases when seen, this may be true of the two texts we have analysed above. However, taking the first issue, we can clarify

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<sup>25</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 338.

<sup>26</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5; *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>28</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 3.

the mutual relationship of the two conditions of *claritas* and *consonantia* by examining Aquinas's commentary upon Dionysius's *On the Divine Names*. A careful reading of this text will demonstrate that these two conditions are connected, respectively, with the Augustinian notes of *species* and *mode*, which, in turn, will clarify how the *ratio* of the beautiful is constituted by cumulative addition within the systematic order of the transcendentals. Once we have established this point, we will then be in a position in the final chapter to explore the relationship between the *ratio* of the beautiful, and its definition as that which pleases when seen.

### *The Dionysian dual formula and the Augustinian triad*

Dionysius's *On the Divine Names* was a text of huge significance for Aquinas and his contemporaries.<sup>29</sup> It is a work of Neoplatonic Christian theology whose central perspective is the transcendent divine cause of all things.<sup>30</sup> Whilst the divine names are all taken from the holy scriptures, God can also be named from creatures according to the *triplex via*. First, by way of *causality*, insofar as creaturely perfections pre-exist in God the first cause of all: existence, life, wisdom, goodness, and so forth, all flow from God into creatures. Secondly, by way of *remotion* or *negation*, insofar as God is absolved of all the modes of imperfection by which creatures possess these perfections: there is no composition, defect or non-being, limitation, variability, or division in God's perfection. Thirdly, by way of *transcendence*, insofar as these perfections pre-exist in God in a super-eminent manner: unlike creatures, God does not participate in, but simply *is*, his existence, life, wisdom, goodness, and so forth.

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<sup>29</sup> See Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, esp. 31-41.

<sup>30</sup> 'Dionysius's intention in this treatise is to elucidate the names attributed in Scripture to God that manifest God's causality with respect to creatures. The primary of these divine names for Dionysius is the Good, that is, the name ascribed in Neoplatonism to the first principle... Good is the first, prior even to Being, because this name manifests most fully the processions of the creatures from God... Dionysius's concern is the transcendence of the divine, not the transcendentality of the most general determinations of being.' Aertsen, 'Beauty in the Middle Ages,' 78-79.

Most relevant to the present study is Aquinas's commentary upon Book IV of *On the Divine Names*, where Dionysius considers divine goodness, under which is also included the names of light and beauty. Aquinas explains this by arguing that, since the good is what all things desire, whatever implies the *ratio* of 'appetibility' or 'desirability' seems to belong to the nature of the good, and such things are light and beauty.<sup>31</sup> Now, this statement must be interpreted in view of Aquinas's argument that the *rationem appetibilis* does not belong to the beautiful except insofar as it assumes or 'puts on' the character of the good, as also happens in the case of the true, which can be something appetible.<sup>32</sup> For instance, in his discussion of the contemplative life, Aquinas makes the observation that, since 'truth is the end of contemplation, it has the aspect of an appetible good, both lovable and delightful, and in this respect it pertains to the appetitive power.'<sup>33</sup> Yet, this is a consideration of truth under the *ratio* of the good, and not according to its own proper character and essence: 'as good is convertible with being, so is the true. But as good adds to being the notion of desirable, so the true adds relation to the intellect.'<sup>34</sup> In other words, the true can take on the character of the good because the two are convertible with being, and with one another, and yet they are conceptually distinct. Similarly, Aquinas may state that light can have the character of being desirable, but this does not pertain to its proper meaning or *ratio*, which he defines instead in terms of 'visibility' and 'manifestation',<sup>35</sup> which is how he also defines the proper *ratio* of the true.<sup>36</sup>

Clearly, then, light (or truth) and beauty are included under the heading of the good, not because they are reducible to the good, but because they can assume the

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<sup>31</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 1 (266).

<sup>32</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1 ad 4.

<sup>33</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>34</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *In II Sent.*, d. 13, q. 1, a. 2; *STh* I, q. 67, a. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Quodlibet.*, X, q. 4, a. 1 obj. 2: 'verum addit supra ens manifestationem' (this premise is implicitly accepted in Aquinas's reply); *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 3 ad 7: 'claritas Dei dicitur veritas suae essentiae, per quam cognoscibilis est, sicut sol per suam claritatem'; *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8: 'ad tertium [i.e. *claritas*], convenit cum proprio filii, in quantum est verbum, quod quidem lux est, et splendor intellectus'.

character of the good. Since the true and the beautiful are 'identical' with the good *secundum rem*, the thing or form signified by these terms is always, at least potentially, something appetible or desirable and therefore good. Nevertheless, it is significant that Aquinas justifies Dionysius's inclusion of the beautiful under the heading of the good in this way, because it means that his consideration of the beautiful is situated, at least to some degree, insofar as it falls within the appetible order. We will return to this point when we examine an important comparison that Aquinas's makes between the beautiful and the good during the course of his commentary.

The most significant discussion of beauty occurs in Aquinas's fifth *lectio* on Book IV, which begins with the observation that the notion of light is a pre-requisite for the understanding of the beautiful.<sup>37</sup> This is significant because the fourth *lectio* is an extended meditation upon the attribution of intelligible light to God, by virtue of the fact that divine truth is the cause of all truth and knowledge, and so, again, we see that the notion of light pertains to the cognition of truth. As we just noted, Aquinas defines the *ratio* of both light and truth in terms of visibility and manifestation. Therefore, we can see this as confirmation of our thesis regarding the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, namely, that the notion of beauty presupposes that of truth or light.

Next, Aquinas comments that there are two reasons why we call God beautiful, namely, according to the way of transcendence or excess, and also according to the way of causality. First, he argues that the way of excess is twofold. On the one hand, something can exceed *within* a genus, in which case it is signified by the comparative or superlative, and on the other hand, something can exceed as that which is *beyond* the genus, and this is signified by the addition of the preposition *super*.<sup>38</sup> For example, fire exceeds within a genus by being 'hottest' or 'most hot', but the sun exceeds beyond the genus of fire, so it is not called 'most hot', but 'superhot', because heat is not in the

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<sup>37</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5.

<sup>38</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (341-43).

sun in the same mode as it is in others, but more excellently. Aquinas notes that these two meanings of excess do not come together simultaneously in creatures, but they do in God, who is said to be ‘most beautiful’ (*pulcherrimus*) and ‘super-beautiful’ (*superpulcher*), not because he is in a genus, but because all that belongs to any genus is attributed to him.<sup>39</sup> God is said to be ‘most beautiful’ because he lacks the twofold deficiency of beauty found in creatures, each of which results from a deficiency of being, namely, *variability* or *corruptibility* – which occurs either through alteration, generation and corruption, and increase or decrease – and also *limitation* or *particularity*, which occurs when a thing of a certain nature is beautiful in one respect but not another, or at one time but not another, or when something is beautiful to some but not to others.<sup>40</sup> In other words, beauty is founded upon being itself, so that its opposite, namely, ugliness, is a privation of being. What this means is that beauty is not a *special* form, but intrinsic to being itself, that is, it is identical, convertible, and co-extensive with being *qua* being. As such, God is beautiful in himself *simpliciter*, in every respect and without qualification.<sup>41</sup> God is also called ‘super-beautiful’ because in his supernatural nature he possesses eminently in himself the font of beauty in its entirety.<sup>42</sup> In other words, every beauty and every beautiful thing pre-exists in the divine simplicity unitedly and uniformly, in the manner in which multiple effects pre-exist in their cause.

This brings us to the second reason why God is said to be beautiful, namely, according to the way of causality, which is the aspect of Aquinas’s commentary that is the most relevant to our immediate argument. God, the ‘super-substantial beautiful’, he argues, is called beauty because he gives beauty to all created things, both spiritual and corporeal, and the *ratio* of beauty is evident from the fact that God

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 4, aa. 2, 3. In other words, there is an analogy of beauty, just as there is an analogy of being, between God and creatures.

<sup>40</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (345).

<sup>41</sup> The language which Dionysius uses at this point of *On the Divine Names* is almost a verbatim quotation of Plato’s *Symposium* 211A-B. See Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 340.

<sup>42</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (347).

is said to 'hand down' beauty insofar as he is the cause of 'harmony' (*consonantia*) and 'brightness' (*claritas*) in all things.<sup>43</sup> We call a person beautiful, he notes, because of their due proportion in 'quantity' and 'position', and because they have a bright and vivid colour – examples taken from sensible beauty – and, more generally, anything is called beautiful according as it has the brightness of its own genus, whether spiritual or corporeal, and according as it is constituted in due proportion – examples which include spiritual or intelligible beauty too.<sup>44</sup> As Aertsen highlights, this is the text to which Aquinas always appeals whenever he restricts the features of the beautiful to harmony and brightness.<sup>45</sup> We will take each of these two aspects in turn.

(i) *Brightness (claritas)*

First, God is the cause of 'brightness' (*claritas*) because he sends to all creatures, with a certain splendour (*fulgore*), the transmission of his luminous rays – which are the font of all light – and these transmissions are the resplendence of the divine rays, according to the participation of a likeness, and they are 'pulchrifying' and produce beauty in things.<sup>46</sup> This rather cryptic statement is clarified later in Aquinas's commentary, as he returns to the theme of divine causality. Citing Dionysius's

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<sup>43</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (339-40).

<sup>44</sup> As Kovach highlights, Aquinas gives examples throughout his work of beauty in the category of substance and in nearly all nine of the categories of accident. See, 'Transcendentality of Beauty,' 84.

<sup>45</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 340. Cf. 'Dionysius's conception of beauty combines the two streams of Greek aesthetics: the older Pythagorean, Platonic one with the Neoplatonic one. According to the older Greek thinkers beauty is based on a relationship of parts and harmony. But Plotinus had argued that beauty also occurs in simple things: the sun and the evening star are beautiful not because of their proportion but because of their brilliance. Light, therefore, is no less a determining factor of beauty than harmony is.' Aertsen, 'Beauty in the Middle Ages,' 81-2. See W. Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics 2: Medieval Aesthetics* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970), 30, 15-16. We might say, however, that the Neoplatonic conception is ultimately reducible to the Pythagorean-Platonic, for even that which is relatively simple, such as light, for instance, is composed of essence and existence, and so it consists in a certain harmony and proportion. Indeed, the greater the harmony, the greater the brilliance of a thing.

<sup>46</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (339-40).

statement that the *esse* of all existing things comes from God's beauty, he argues that, since the notion of 'brightness' (*claritas*) belongs to the consideration of beauty, every *form* through which a thing has its existence (*esse*) is a certain participation in the divine brightness, and so, every singular is beautiful according to its nature and proper form, and in this way the existence of all things is derived from the divine beauty.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, in the sixth *lectio* on Book IV, Aquinas argues that every substantial essence and every complementary form (i.e., every kind of accidental form) is a certain 'irradiation' coming from the first brightness of God's beauty.<sup>48</sup> Parallels to this point can be found in the commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, where Aquinas argues that the form of a thing is its beauty,<sup>49</sup> and that the truth (*veritas*) of God's essence, through which he is knowable, is called his brightness (*claritas*), just as the sun is knowable through its brightness.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, the notion of 'brightness' (*claritas*) refers to the form of a being through which it has its existence, and by which it is knowable. God is the cause of all 'brightness' insofar as the form of the divine essence is the font of all light, the *prima claritate*, which communicates and transmits its light to creatures by bestowing form upon them, and this transmission is a resplendent effulgence that is 'pulchrifying' insofar as it enables creatures to participate in a likeness of the divine beauty.<sup>51</sup> In other words, 'brightness' (*claritas*) refers to the form or essence of a being, which is that aspect in a being from which the note of truth arises.

Thus far we have encountered the sense in which *claritas* is a property that belongs to things in themselves. For instance, in those texts where Aquinas explains the appropriation of 'species', or beauty, to the divine person of the Son, he argues that we call people beautiful by virtue of their 'splendorous' (*splendentem*) or 'brilliant'

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<sup>47</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (349).

<sup>48</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 6 (360).

<sup>49</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 1, q. 1 s.c. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 3 ad 7: '*claritas Dei dicitur veritas suae essentiae, per quam cognoscibilis est, sicut sol per suam claritatem.*'

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *STh I*, q. 66, a. 1, where Aquinas argues that the bestowal of form upon corporeal creatures results in a threefold beauty of light, visibility, and adornment.

(*nitidum*) colour, an example he offers in order to demonstrate that *claritas* is a requirement of beauty.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, it denotes the idea of splendour or brilliance, by which the visibility of a thing shines forth to others. Therefore, he argues that the notion of *claritas* agrees with what is proper to the person of the Son insofar as he is the Word, which indeed is ‘light’ (*lux*), and the splendour of the intellect,<sup>53</sup> and which ‘radiates’ over all things, and in which all things are ‘resplendent’.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, as we have just seen, all things have *claritas* by virtue of their form or essence, which, in turn, is a certain ‘irradiation’ coming from God, the first brightness and cause of all the substantial essences of things,<sup>55</sup> so that the truth of God’s essence, through which he is knowable, is called his *claritas*.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, the *claritas* that belongs to things can be described as a visible light or brightness by which they manifest themselves to others.

Indeed, Aquinas makes this connection explicit when he explains the metaphorical application of light to spiritual things.<sup>57</sup> Light (*lux*), he argues, is a quality that is essentially visible (*per se visibilis*), and a determinate species in sensible things, so it can be transferred to spiritual things only by way of a certain likeness of ‘proportionality’ (*proportionabilitatis*), which is reduced to a commonality of analogy. As such, just as bodily light is related to sensitive manifestation, in spiritual things light is related to intellectual manifestation, and because manifestation is more truly in spiritual things than in sensible things, we can say that, with respect to the notion of manifestation, light is more truly in spiritual things, even though this is not the case with respect to the proper notion of light as a sensible quality. Therefore, he concludes, all that is manifest is light, and it is called ‘clear’ (*clarum*), and all that is hidden is called ‘obscure’.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1; *STh I*, q. 39, a. 8. Cf. *STh II-II*, q. 145, a. 2.

<sup>53</sup> *STh I*, q. 39, a. 8.

<sup>54</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1.

<sup>55</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 6 (360).

<sup>56</sup> *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 3 ad 7.

<sup>57</sup> *In II Sent.*, d. 13, q. 1, a. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *STh I*, q. 67, a. 1.

Now, the multivalency of the word *claritas*, especially in terms of the themes of vision, light, and manifestation, is brought together in a particularly important passage in Aquinas's commentary on the *Sentences*, where he lists three things upon which the 'clarity' (*claritas*) or 'limpidity' of vision depends.<sup>59</sup> First, there is the efficacy of the visual *power*, so that those who have a stronger sense of sight see with greater clarity, for instance. We might characterise this as the way in which *claritas* signifies the notion of 'certainty' in knowledge.<sup>60</sup> Secondly, there is the clarity of the *light* under which the visible is seen, so that those things seen in the light of the sun are seen with greater clarity than those which are seen in the light of the moon, for instance. This is a slightly different conception of *claritas* as light, in comparison to the one that we encountered above, that is, it signifies not the intrinsic capacity of a thing to manifest itself by its visible light and brightness, but rather the way in which something can be the source of light that illuminates other things, thereby making them more visible and clear to the knowing subject. We might characterise this as the way in which *claritas* signifies the notion of 'luminance'. Thirdly, there is the *relation* (*comparatione*) of the visible to the one seeing, or that *in which* the thing is seen, so that which is seen at a greater remove is seen with less clarity, for instance. We might say that this third aspect relates to the visible light and brightness of *things* themselves, especially in their relation to the seeing and knowing subject.

Now, the context of this discussion is the question of whether Christ's human soul sees and knows with the same degree of clarity as the divine Word. In other words, does the person of Christ have the same degree of clarity or limpidity in his human knowledge as he does in the knowledge he has according to the divine nature? Aquinas answers in the negative. First, because Christ's human *power* of understanding is not as great as that of the eternal Word's – the former being finite, the latter being infinite. Secondly, because the *light* under which his human intellect

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<sup>59</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 2, qa. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *In II Sent.*, d. 3, q. 3, a. 2 ad 2; *STh I*, q. 94; *ScG III*, 49 (10): 'Certius ergo sciunt substantiae separatae et clarius quam nos, quod Deus est.'

sees falls short of the uncreated light – again, a difference between the finite and the infinite. Thirdly, and most importantly for our present purposes, because the divine essence, which is the exemplar of all things, and *in which* God knows all things, is more ‘conjoined’ (*conjuncta*) to God than with any creature. In other words, there is a *relation* of identity between what God knows and who God is, and whereas the divine nature is joined to Christ’s human nature in the hypostatic union, the two natures are not identical with one another, and so Christ’s human knowledge is distinct from the divine knowledge of the Word, even though the two are united in one person.<sup>61</sup> Put simply, the ‘clarity’ of vision or knowledge depends upon the relation between the visible and the one seeing, such that there is greater *claritas* where there is a greater ‘conjunction’ between these two terms of the relation.

In this respect, the notion of *claritas* is strongly connected with Aquinas’s theory of knowledge. For instance, he argues in the *Summa contra gentiles* that the ‘conjoinability’ of the object of knowledge with the knowing subject is one of two things upon which the perfection of the intellectual operation depends:

Since through the intelligible species the intellect is directed to the thing understood, the perfection of intellectual operation depends on two things. One is that the intelligible species be perfectly conformed to the thing understood. The second is that it be perfectly joined [*coniungatur*] to the intellect, which is realized more fully according as the intellect has greater power in understanding. Now, the divine essence, which is the intelligible species by which the divine intellect understands, is absolutely identical with God and it is also absolutely identical with His intellect. Therefore, God understands Himself most perfectly.<sup>62</sup>

In other words, the degree of a thing’s visible light and brightness is in proportion to its conjoinability to the intellect, and the more conjoinable a thing is to the intellect, the brighter and clearer it is. Accordingly, merely material beings are at the bottom of the scale of ontological brightness, for they only have an ‘obscure’ participation in the good, and the ‘brightness’ (*claritas*) of the divine goodness is obscured in them (especially in inanimate creatures) because of their materiality, since they are not

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 14.

<sup>62</sup> *ScG* I, 47 (2). Cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 3, a. 2.

intelligible in act, but only in potentiality.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, not only is the materiality of corporeal beings the cause of their obscurity and lack of brightness, the materiality of their essence is also why they are not directly 'conjoinable' to the intellect, but only conjoined by means of an immaterial likeness of themselves.<sup>64</sup> In other words, the degree to which something has 'brightness' (*claritas*) is in proportion to its 'conjoinability' to the intellect (and therefore its immateriality), that is, it is in proportion to its intrinsic intelligibility. As such, we can conclude that the Dionysian note of *claritas* corresponds with the Augustinian note of *species*, by which a thing is bestowed with an intelligible light by which it manifests itself, and from which arises the transcendental of the true: *claritas* is what the true 'adds' to being.

As Aquinas says at the beginning of the fifth *lectio* on Book IV, the beautiful presupposes the notion of light or truth, and so, within the cumulative order of the transcendentals, brightness belongs first to the *ratio* of the true, to which the beautiful is constituted by inclusion and cumulative addition. Therefore, because the transcendentals add to being in order of proximity, the more brightness (*claritas*) a being has, the more beautiful it is, for the true is immediately presupposed by the beautiful, so that the former is included within the *ratio* of the latter.

## ii. Harmony (*consonantia*)

Secondly, Aquinas explains that God is the cause of a twofold 'harmony' in all things.<sup>65</sup> The first harmony is the 'order' of creatures to God, insofar as he calls all things and turns them to himself as to their end, which is why 'beauty' (*kallos*) is derived from the verb 'to call' (*kaleo*). The second harmony is the 'order' of all creatures to each other, whereby they are all ultimately directed to the same end. In other words, the harmony

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<sup>63</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 16 (501).

<sup>64</sup> *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, a. 2 ad 16.

<sup>65</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (339-40).

of creation consists in the *unity* of all things, insofar as they are all drawn toward the *same* ultimate end, namely, God. Aquinas explains further, since harmony belongs to the nature of beauty, all things that in any way pertain to harmony proceed from the divine beauty. Accordingly, because of divine beauty there is ‘concord’ among all rational creatures in terms of intellect, for there is concord among those who agree in the same opinion, and also in terms of friendship, where there is concord in ‘affection’.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, among all creatures universally, whatever *union* there is between them is by virtue of beauty.<sup>67</sup>

As we noted above, this connection between harmony and unity was evident in Aquinas’s discussion of the Trinitarian appropriations. For instance, he argues that there is the harmony of the Son insofar as he is the Father’s image, to whom he is ‘equal’ and ‘like’ in all things, there is the harmony of the Son with himself, insofar as all of his attributes are not different, but one, and there is the harmony of the Son with created things, for the formal character of all things are within him, and are one in him, just as he is one with the Father.<sup>68</sup> In other words, the connection between harmony and order signifies what we might call a formal quality, that is, the integrity of creation as a whole – in contrast to the form of an individual being – a composition of difference that is concordant, so that the many are not simply divided against one another, but cohere and co-exist in a beautiful order that harmonises toward God in its unity. As Aquinas puts it in the *Summa theologiae*:

For we nowhere find that several things proceed from one without order except in those which differ only by their matter; as for instance one smith produces many knives distinct from each other materially, with no order to each other; whereas in things in which there is not only a material distinction we always find that some order exists in the multitude produced. Hence also in the order of creatures produced, the beauty of the divine wisdom is displayed.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> In the next chapter, we will explore the paradigmatic importance of *friendship* in relation to beauty.

<sup>67</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (349).

<sup>68</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *STh* I, q. 36, a. 2. Cf. *STh* I, q. 45, a. 6 ad 3, where Aquinas argues that the order of creatures is fittingly associated with divine wisdom, that is, with the form of the divine intellect, as opposed to the final causality of the divine will.

Likewise, Aquinas also presents the order of the world as one of three arguments for the fact that God is one (*unum*):

For all things that exist are seen to be ordered to each other since some serve others. But things that are diverse do not harmonise (*convenient*) in the same order, unless they are ordered thereto by one. For many are reduced into one order by one better than by many: because one is the *per se* cause of one, and many are only the accidental cause of one, inasmuch as they are in some way one. Since therefore what is first is most perfect, and is so *per se* and not accidentally, it must be that the first which reduces all into one order should be only one. And this one is God.<sup>70</sup>

What Aquinas principally has in mind in his commentary on Dionysius is the causality of divine beauty in relation to all created being. Therefore, insofar as the unity or harmony of the order in creation is a display of divine wisdom, it has the nature of a formal character pertaining to the whole. We might even say that the harmonious order of the universe is beautiful insofar as it is a delightful and fitting form to behold. To participate in this order, as a finite subject desiring and seeking the perfection that is the proper end of one's nature, is to relate to being in the order of the good under the mode of final causality. This is what the Augustinian note of *order* signifies. However, to behold this order as a harmonious whole, as a display of divine wisdom, is to relate to being in the order of the beautiful under the mode of formal causality.<sup>71</sup> It is primarily this latter aspect which Aquinas has in mind in his commentary on Dionysius when he links beauty to the notion of *order*.

Indeed, the sixth *lectio* on Book IV is an extended meditation on the causality of the beautiful in relation to the one and the many. For instance, in connection with the *ratio* of the 'one' (*unum*), which consists in 'indivision', he argues that all unity and distinction – in relation to substance, quality, and quantity – is caused by divine beauty, for those things which are different in one respect are united in another, as parts in a whole, or species in a genus, for instance, and all of this pertains to 'harmony' (*consonantia*), which is included in the *ratio* of beauty.<sup>72</sup> In other words,

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<sup>70</sup> *STh* I, q. 11, a. 3.

<sup>71</sup> The beautiful belongs to the notion of a formal cause. See *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1.

<sup>72</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 6 (361).

Aquinas explicitly connects the *ratio* of the one with the notion of harmony, insofar as the latter is an aspect of beauty. Next, he discusses all that pertains to the order of things, and he argues that, just as the parts of a house are different yet adapted to one another, all the parts of the universe are diverse, but agree with one another insofar as they all have existence, and are adapted to one another because they all fall under one order, so that, in this way, the harmony of the whole is constituted from the due proportion of all the parts. Again, the notions of proportion and harmony are explicitly connected with the relation between the many in the unity of the whole. Finally, Aquinas discusses rest and movement in terms of the causality of divine beauty – the former placing everything in its proper *ratio* and station, and the latter moving it toward God as to its ultimate end – and he concludes that ‘form’ is that upon which the proper *ratio* of a thing depends, and it pertains to ‘brightness’ (*claritas*), and ‘order’ to the end pertains to ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*), and in this way rest and movement are caused by divine beauty.<sup>73</sup> In this respect, we might say that if form concerns the rest of each thing in its proper essential character, order is a kind of ‘moving form’; that is, not form in the sense of that by which an individual stands in its own substantial being, but rather, in the sense of that by which a multitude is comprised within the unity of a dynamic and harmonious movement toward God.

Now, if the notion of ‘order’ is connected with ‘harmony’ in terms of the relation between the one and the many, the whole and its parts, as applied to the universe in its totality, it also equally applies to individual beings. For instance, in his commentary on Dionysius, as Aquinas discusses the subject of evil as the privation of the good, he consistently employs the category of ‘order’ to describe that which suffers privation in relation to a certain nature. That is, evil is a corruption of *order* as opposed to a corruption of the very nature or *substance* of that which suffers the corruption of order. In other words, evil affects the accidental being of a creature, and not its

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<sup>73</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 6 (367): ‘Forma autem a qua dependet propria ratio rei, pertinent ad claritatem; ordo autem ad finem, ad consonantiam; et sic motus et quies reducuntur in causalitatem pulchri.’

substantial being, otherwise, the corruption of evil would not be a privation in a subject, but total non-existence. Therefore, in this context, the notion of ‘order’ refers to the accidental being and circumstances super-added to the natural substance of created beings.

For instance, in the nineteenth *lectio* of his commentary on Book IV, Aquinas argues that nothing existing is corrupted by evil in terms of its very substance or nature – as in the case of the substance and nature of a human being, which remain even though we call that person evil. Instead, something is called evil for the reason that ‘the proportion of harmony and commensuration’ (*proportio harmoniae et commensurationis*), which is according to some nature, is debilitated by some ‘defect of order’, not so that the subject is entirely destroyed, but such that there is a corruption or privation in the subject.<sup>74</sup> Crucially, this passage very closely connects the meaning of ‘order’ with the notions of ‘harmony’, ‘proportion’, and ‘commensuration’, in reference to the accidental being of a substance, which can suffer evil through privation. In other words, one of the two aspects of the Dionysian formulation of the *ratio* of beauty, namely, harmony or proportion, is connected with the notion of commensuration, which is the word that Aquinas uses to describe the Augustinian note of ‘mode’ or ‘measure’. In his commentary on Dionysius, the notion of ‘order’ refers to these two connected terms, and not the relation by which one thing is perfective of another in the order of the good, which, in turn, is the more restricted sense that it has in the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*.

Likewise, this connection is also apparent in the twenty-first *lectio* of Book IV, where Aquinas argues that the evil of the body is either ugliness or weakness, both of which are a defect in some form, or a privation of some order, since the two requirements of beauty are brightness of form, and commensuration which pertains to order.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the evil of the body is not matter, he argues, for matter is not

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<sup>74</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 19.

<sup>75</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 21 (554).

non-being or evil *per se*, but only *per accidens*, insofar as it suffers privation. By contrast, insofar as matter exists under form it has a participation in ‘form’ as regards ‘substantial being’, and a participation in ‘beauty’ (*pulchritudinis*) according to ‘commensuration’ and *decorem*, which concerns the operation of ‘intrinsic accidents’ and other things ‘ornamenting’ or ‘adorning’ the being in relation to the exterior things that surround it.<sup>76</sup> In other words, form or brightness is a participation in substantial being, whereas order belongs to the notion of commensuration (which has just been connected with proportion and harmony in the nineteenth *lectio*), which, in turn, belongs to the idea of the super-added accidental being and adornment of a thing, and this is described as a *participation in beauty*. This is highly resonant of our discussion of the ‘honourable’ in the previous chapter, which we characterised as spiritual beauty insofar as it is a fitting accidental augmentation of a thing’s substantial being, and, therefore, as a measure of being that is in proportion to the species or form of the one in whom it is found. Likewise, as we argued in the previous chapter, we can extend the idea of a fitting proportion or harmony between a substance and its accidents, to the substantial being of a thing itself, insofar as there is a harmonious and proportionate commensuration between every form (substantial or accidental) and the act of existence which actuates that form according to the measure of the form. In other words, the basic ontological composition in all creatures between existence and essence is one of harmonious and proportionate commensuration.

Finally, Aquinas explicitly connects the related notions of beauty, commensuration, order, proportion, and harmony with the Augustinian note of ‘mode’ in the twenty-second *lectio* of Book IV. At the beginning of this section of his commentary he states that health and beauty are caused by the body being ‘well-proportioned’ in relation to all of its parts, and that the sufficient condition for sickness

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid. Cf. *STh* I, q. 6, a. 3: ‘Perfectio autem alicuius rei triplex est. Prima quidem, secundum quod in suo esse constituitur. *Secunda vero, prout ei aliqua accidentia superadduntur, ad suam perfectam operationem necessaria.* Tertia vero perfectio alicuius est per hoc, quod aliquid aliud attingit sicut finem.’

or ugliness is the lack of 'due proportion' in any part.<sup>77</sup> Towards the end of this section, this example is linked with the notion of 'commensuration' and 'mode', as Aquinas explicitly discusses the Augustinian triad in relation to the idea of privation. To understand the way in which something suffers the privation of evil, he argues, we must consider the idea of the good in general, to which three things pertain: (1) the 'commensuration' of those things of which it is composed, as health is the commensuration of humours, and beauty the commensuration of members, so that evil is 'incommensuration', as in the case of sickness and ugliness; (2) an 'act' attaining to its due end, the opposite of which is sin, as in the case of nature producing something monstrous, or a bad writer producing bad writing, or when the will does not produce a virtuous act – in other words, the *formal* character of something produced; and (3) it also belongs to the nature of the good that it be 'intended', because the good is what all desire, and so evil is that which lacks intention.<sup>78</sup> Aquinas argues that these three are reduced to the Augustinian triad *mode-species-order*, for incommensuration is a privation of mode, sin is a privation of species, and the lack of intention is a privation of order.<sup>79</sup> In other words, the notion of desire and intention is explicitly connected with the Augustinian note of 'order', which is what the good 'adds' to being, and within the fullness of this threefold mode of perfection, the note that is particularly associated with beauty is 'mode', which Aquinas illustrates by means of the 'commensuration' or 'proportion' of members in the body, just as health is the commensuration of humours.

In summary, in *lectio* 5 and 6 of his commentary on Book IV, Aquinas connects 'harmony' with 'order to the end', which might seem to suggest that *consonantia* should be linked with the Augustinian note of 'order'. However, in this latter sense, the notion of order has a restricted meaning, insofar as it signifies the intentionality

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<sup>77</sup> The example of the proportion of bodily members is Aquinas's preferred example used to demonstrate the condition of 'harmony' (*consonantia*) or 'due proportion' (*debita proportio*) as a requirement for beauty.

<sup>78</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 22 (590).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

and desire of a subject for another, according as that other is perfective as an end in the order of the good. However, in his commentary on Dionysius, Aquinas generally employs the category of 'order' in connection with the idea of the relation between a whole and its parts – both in terms of the totality of the universe, and in terms of the relation between an individual substance and its accidents. It is this harmony of parts within a whole that belongs to the notion of beauty,<sup>80</sup> and it is signified by the Augustinian note of 'mode', which has a close connection with the idea of the 'one'. By contrast, the desirability of another as an end that is perfective belongs to the notion of the good, and this is properly signified by the Augustinian note of 'order'.

Indeed, immediately after making this connection with the Augustinian triad, Aquinas states that the beautiful is convertible with the good, and refers back to the distinction he makes between these two in terms of 'order'.<sup>81</sup> This is a reference to Aquinas's concluding remarks in the fifth *lectio* on Book IV. Having considered the causality of divine beauty, he argues, Dionysius infers a certain corollary, namely, that because the beautiful is the cause of all, it is the same as the good, for all things desire the beautiful and the good as a cause in all ways, an identity that is also manifested by the fact that there is nothing that does not participate in the beautiful and the good, for each thing is beautiful and good according to its form.<sup>82</sup> This statement affirms the 'identity' and 'co-extension' of the beautiful with the good, and, as we have already mentioned, it is referenced later in Aquinas's commentary when he describes the beautiful and the good as being 'convertible' with one another.<sup>83</sup>

Aertsen argues that Dionysius is only stating an identity between the good and the beautiful, and not that the latter is a property of 'being' in distinction from the former, which is exactly the point at issue in terms of the transcendental status of the

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<sup>80</sup> *De virtutibus* q. 1, a. 9 ad 16: 'Ad hoc autem quod aliquid sit bonum simpliciter, requiritur quod sit totaliter perfectum; sicut ad hoc quod aliquid sit pulchrum simpliciter requiritur quod in nulla parte sit aliqua deformitas vel turpitudine.'

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*: 'pulchrum convertitur cum bono, ut supra dictum est.'

<sup>82</sup> *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (355).

<sup>83</sup> See note 81.

beautiful.<sup>84</sup> Instead, ‘the Areopagite is a typical representative of Greek thought, for in Hellenic culture the beautiful and the good are brought together in a single notion, the *kalokagathia*.’<sup>85</sup> However, Aquinas interrupts his commentary at this point to add a qualification of his own: although the beautiful and the good are identical in subject (*idem subiecto*), since ‘brightness’ and ‘harmony’ are contained in the *ratio* of the good, nevertheless they are different in concept (*ratione differunt*), for the beautiful adds to the good a relation to the power capable of knowing that it (i.e., the good) is of such a kind.<sup>86</sup> As Aertsen recognises, with this qualification, Aquinas’s commentary goes beyond the text of Dionysius, and introduces a new element whereby the beautiful and the good are distinguished conceptually, and, moreover, in terms that Aquinas normally uses to establish the identity and difference of the transcendentals.<sup>87</sup>

Having established in the previous chapter that the beautiful and the good are fully distinct in Aquinas’s thought, our present concern relates to the structure of this statement, namely, that the *ratio* of the beautiful and the good consists in (1) ‘brightness’ (*claritas*), and (2) ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*), and that there is a difference between the two in terms of (3) a certain kind of ‘order’, which one adds to the notion of the other. Indeed, this statement is structurally very similar to the key text which has guided our study concerning the systematic place of the beautiful within the cumulative order of the transcendentals. We recall that in *De vertiate* 22.1 ad 12,

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<sup>84</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 342.

<sup>85</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 341. Cf. R. Bubner, ‘Kalokagathia,’ in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* IV (Darmstadt, 1976), 681-84.

<sup>86</sup> In *De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (356): ‘Quamvis autem pulchrum et bonum sint idem subiecto, quia tam claritas quam consonantia sub ratione boni continentur, tamen ratione differunt: nam pulchrum addit supra bonum, ordinem ad vim cognoscitivam illud esse huiusmodi.’ For an important discussion of what *illud* refers to in this formulation, see Brendan Thomas Sammon, *The God Who Is Beauty: Beauty as a Divine Name in Thomas Aquinas and Dionysius the Areopagite*, Princeton Theological Monographs (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 311-12.

<sup>87</sup> Aertsen, *The Transcendentals*, 343. Many scholars have seen this text as a demonstration that Aquinas considered the beautiful to be a transcendental. For example, see Kovach, ‘Transcendentalism of Beauty,’ 85; Luis Clavell, ‘La Belleza en el Comentario Tomista al De Divinis Nominibus,’ *Anuario Filosófico* 17 (1984), 99. Cf. Eco, *The Aesthetics*, 31.

Aquinas argues, again, in relation to Dionysius's statement that all things desire the beautiful and the good:

By the very fact of tending to good a thing at the same time tends to the beautiful [...] inasmuch as it is proportioned [*modificatum*] and specified [*specificatum*] in itself. These notes are included in the essential character of good, but good adds a relationship of what is perfective in regard to other things [*sed bonum addit ordinem perfectivi ad alia*].<sup>88</sup>

In other words, the beautiful and the good are identical in subject since (1) *species* and (2) *mode* are contained in the *ratio* of the good, and they are different in concept because (3) the good adds to the beautiful an *order* by which one thing is perfective of another. In other words, both the beautiful and the good are constituted by (1) *brightness/species* and (2) *harmony/mode*, and they differ in terms of (3) a certain order.

The one significant difference is that, on the one hand, in *De veritate* 22.1 ad 12 Aquinas says that the good 'adds' this third element to the beautiful, namely, an order by which one thing is perfective in relation to others, whereas on the other hand, in his commentary on Dionysius he says that the beautiful makes this addition to the good, namely, an order of relation to the cognitive power.<sup>89</sup> In light of our argument in the previous chapter, my contention is that the former text should be privileged. That is, in an absolute sense, it is the good which 'adds' to the beautiful. After all, as we noted at the beginning of this section, Aquinas argues that the beautiful is considered by Dionysius insofar as it is something that can assume the character of the good, and thereby fall within the appetible order, as is also the case with light or truth, which is presupposed to the notion of beauty. Therefore, as we argued in the previous chapter, the threefold statement in the commentary on Dionysius is a consideration of the beautiful insofar as it stands to the good as the particular to the universal, in which case the good has priority. However, outside of the appetible order the beautiful precedes the good *simpliciter*, and it follows upon the true. Therefore,

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<sup>88</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 12.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

within the cumulative order of the transcendentals, and according to both the Dionysian dual formula of *brightness* and *harmony*, and also the Augustinian notes *species* and *mode*, the beautiful ‘adds’ to the true, and is that which is presupposed by the good. This can be represented as follows:

|                        | <b>The true</b>   | <b>The beautiful</b>            | <b>The good</b>  |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Precondition           | <i>res</i>        | <i>unum</i>                     | <i>aliquid</i>   |
| Augustinian triad      | <i>species</i>    | <i>species +<br/>mode</i>       | <i>species +<br/>mode +<br/>order</i>                  |
| Dionysian dual formula | <i>brightness</i> | <i>brightness +<br/>harmony</i> | <i>brightness +<br/>harmony +<br/>[perfectiveness]</i> |
| Relation to the soul   | <i>knowledge</i>  | ?                               | <i>desire</i>  |

However, this brings into focus the fact that the beautiful does not add to being the notion of harmony or proportion *per se*, but rather, the relation of the human soul to this aspect of a being. In answer to Aertsen, we may have clarified the mutual relation between the different aspects involved in the *ratio* of beauty; that is, by means of the framework of the Augustinian triad, we have clarified that the beautiful is constituted by the addition of *consonantia* to *claritas*, the latter being that which alone constitutes the true. Yet, we have still not explained how this *ratio* relates to the *per posteriora* definition of the beautiful as that which ‘pleases when seen’, or as that of

which the very apprehension pleases. Of course, this brings us back to the anthropological dimension of the transcendentals, which is in the forefront of *De veritate* 1.1, and the key reference in that text to Aristotle's statement that the soul is in a manner all things. Therefore, in the final chapter of our study, it will be our task to identify whether there is an aspect of Aquinas's anthropology of the soul which might correspond to the intrinsic harmony and proportion of a being. In other words, we must ask whether there is an act of the soul whereby we take pleasure in the harmony and intrinsic proportion of a being's existence and form, which is distinct from the appetitive pleasure experienced in the order of the good.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### LOVE:

#### THE RELATION OF THE SOUL TO THE BEAUTY OF BEING

The beautiful is that which *pleases when seen*, just as the true is the *conformity or adequation* of intellect and thing, and as the good is *what all desire*. As such, it is a relational transcendental. As the true adds to being the notion of a relation of assimilation between ‘thing’ (*res*) and the soul’s power of intellect, and as the good adds a relation of desire between the soul’s power of will and another being considered as ‘something’ (*aliquid*), the uniqueness of the beautiful must not simply be the intrinsic unity and harmony of a being, which is expressed by ‘one’ (*unum*). It must also express a certain kind of relation to this aspect in a being. In other words, in order to complete our analysis in the present study, we must find a connection between, on the one hand, Aquinas’s *per posteriora* definition of the beautiful as that which pleases when seen, and, on the other hand, his characterisation of the intrinsic *ratio* of the beautiful as constituted by the Augustinian notes of *species* and *mode*, or the Dionysian formulation of *claritas* and *consonantia*. We must identify the relation of the soul whereby we take delight in apprehending the intrinsic unity and harmony of another. In this chapter, I will argue that *love*, as Aquinas characterises it, is precisely this relation.

David C. Schindler has recently drawn attention to the fruitful connections in Aquinas’s thought between the beautiful and love (*amor*).<sup>1</sup> However, this is an implicit connection, he argues, one that lies buried below the surface, and, moreover, one that

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<sup>1</sup> David C. Schindler, ‘Love and Beauty: the “Forgotten Transcendental” in Thomas Aquinas’, *Communio* 44 (Summer 2017): 334-356; *Love and the Postmodern Predicament: Rediscovering the Real in Beauty, Goodness, and Truth*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018), esp. 85-117. Schindler’s work is fundamental to the argument advanced in this chapter.

appears to be in tension with the way in which Aquinas connects love with the good.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, there was an essential and explicit connection between love and beauty in the preceding tradition of Platonic thought. For instance, beauty is identified as the principle and object of *eros* by Plato in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*,<sup>3</sup> and as the cause of love by Plotinus in the *Enneads*.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, love is consistently connected with beauty in the reception of this tradition in Christian Neoplatonism. For instance, in the Western tradition, this receives one of its most celebrated articulations in Book X of Augustine's *Confessions*: 'Late have I loved thee, O Beauty, ever ancient and ever new.'<sup>5</sup> Yet, Schindler argues, there is a fundamental 'shift' when it comes to the thinkers of the high Middle Ages, namely, that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it is goodness, and not beauty, which is presented as the essential object of love.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he contends that this shift is not unrelated to the apparent marginalising of beauty in this period.<sup>7</sup> As we noted in the introduction to this study, beauty is a

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<sup>2</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty', 336-7.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, 237d-238c; 250b-e; *Symposium*, 204d.

<sup>4</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads* III.5.1.

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, X.27. Schindler highlights that the Eastern Church maintained the connection between love and beauty in an explicit way through the great anthology of the fathers of the spiritual life, *The Philokalia* (i.e., 'the love of beauty'). For the importance of beauty to Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, see David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), esp. 187-210.

<sup>6</sup> As Schindler notes, it is not as if goodness was absent from ancient and patristic discussions of love. However, the role of goodness in relation to love was, for them, one that was derived from its kinship with beauty. See 'Love and Beauty,' 336. Furthermore, he argues that the 'relegation' of love to the order of the good, rather than it being connected principally to beauty, opens the door in the Middle Ages to what he calls the 'modern impoverishment of love', namely, the paradoxical reduction of love to a merely subjective feeling, which is at the same time revered because of its intrinsically private and personal dimensions, thereby detaching the experience of love from reality in its public and communal dimensions. Such a 'de-substantialising' of love is evident in modern philosophy, where it was often characterised in a possessive and selfish manner. For instance, in his *Passions of the Soul* (articles 79, 85, and 90), Descartes describes love as merely the promise of gratification, and in his *Metaphysics of Morals* (161, 198-99), Kant reduces love to the desire for immediate gratification. Finally, Schindler argues, it is within this context that we witness the kind of reaction found in Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros*, which valorises an altruistic conception of love, that is no less arbitrary than the selfish conception of love that it opposes, since such altruistic love claims to arise in no way from the attraction of the object – which is actually impossible – and so its feigned spontaneity merely hides the ulterior motivations of the subject. The door is opened, at least in part, to this modern impoverishment, Schindler argues, by a one-sided resolution of the tension in Aquinas's account of love in favour of the connection with the good. See *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 85-88, 90-91

<sup>7</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 335.

disputed question, not just in Aquinas, but also in the Middle Ages more generally. Paradoxically, it seems to have a certain dignity, but it is not included in the major lists of the transcendentals, and so, perhaps the medieval shift away from the connection between love and beauty is symptomatic of a certain ‘forgetfulness’ in relation to the latter’s transcendental status.<sup>8</sup>

Now, we can very briefly state the clear connection between love and the appetitive order of the good that is present in the thought of Aquinas, as follows. Appetite, he argues, is *nothing other* than the inclination of an appetitive subject towards that which is similar and agreeable to themselves, namely, the good,<sup>9</sup> and so, love is something pertaining to the appetite, since the object of both is the good.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, at times Aquinas will argue that the good is the ‘sole cause’ of love.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, according to his most universal formulation, love is the ‘first movement’ of the will and of every appetitive power in its tendency towards the good.<sup>12</sup> While the other acts of the will and appetite regard the good under some ‘special’ condition – as pleasure is rest in the good as possessed, and desire is movement toward the good as not yet possessed – by contrast, love regards the good ‘generally’ (*in communi*), whether possessed or not; and since the universal naturally precedes the particular, love is naturally the ‘first act’ of the will and appetite, so that all other movements of the appetite presuppose love as a kind of ‘primary root’ (*primam radicem*).<sup>13</sup> This is so because, since the good has the *ratio* of an end, whatever tends to an end must have, in the first place, an ‘aptitude’ or ‘proportion’ to that end (for nothing tends to a disproportionate end), before, secondly, being moved to that end, and thirdly, resting in the end once it is attained.<sup>14</sup> Aquinas defines love precisely as this very aptitude or

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<sup>8</sup> Etienne Gilson described beauty in the Middle Ages as the ‘forgotten transcendental’ in his *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 159-63.

<sup>9</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 8, a. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 s.c.: ‘Solum igitur bonum est causa amoris.’

<sup>12</sup> *STh* I, q. 20, a. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> This demarcates the essentially threefold structure of appetite: (1) the *proportion* of appetite to the end, which is its *principle* of movement (i.e., love); (2) *movement* toward the end (i.e., desire); and

proportion of the appetite to the good, namely, ‘complacency in good’ (*complacentia boni*).<sup>15</sup>

Accordingly, he argues that, on the part of the end, the cause of the appetitive movement is the object of that movement, but the cause by way of principle is the inward inclination of the appetite, namely, love, which is the ‘first principle’ of this appetitive movement, ‘the first inclination of the appetite towards the possession of good.’<sup>16</sup> As such, love is first in the ‘order of execution’, and precedes desire, which, in turn, precedes pleasure. However, in the ‘order of intention’ this sequence is reversed, so that the pleasure one intends for oneself is the cause of one’s desire and love in relation to a particular end.<sup>17</sup> In other words, Aquinas argues that the pleasure we seek from a particular good is in this instance the cause of our positive disposition toward that end, namely, our love for it. As Schindler argues, if we take this at face value, it seems to suggest that love is simply a function of pleasure, that is, a merely instrumental good circumscribed within the horizon of the appetite’s seeking after its own satisfaction, which is surely contrary to our most basic experience of love.<sup>18</sup>

As is the case for Schindler, our immediate concern is not to explain the historical reasons concerning why the good replaced the beautiful in its connection with love in the thought of Aquinas and his contemporaries – which would be well

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(3) *rest* in the end (i.e., pleasure, at least for those creatures endowed with knowledge, who can know that they have attained a specific end.)

<sup>15</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2. It is worth highlighting at this early stage that the definition of love as *complacentia boni* means something quite different from the modern usage of the English word ‘complacency’. It denotes the sense of being pleased *with* another, that is, with the other *qua* other, in contrast to the pleasure we take in something being our own. We will develop this point below. See Schindler, *The Postmodern Predicament*, 95, fn. 43. Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2, ad 2.

<sup>16</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 36, a. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 95. Schindler also highlights how Aquinas qualifies this position in *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 4 ad 1, when he argues that whenever a thing is loved for the pleasure that it affords, love is indeed caused by pleasure, but this pleasure, in turn, is caused by another ‘preceding love’. Rather than seeing in this statement an ineluctable infinite regress, Schindler argues that ‘it becomes clear here that if pleasure comes generally first in the order of intention, love represents an order that *precedes* intentionality itself; it sets the fundamental context *within which* one would come to seek any particular good.’ (Ibid. 96.) This is an interesting suggestion, but regardless of the solution to this problem, the issue highlights that there remains a particular ambiguity in Aquinas’s conception of the connection between love and the good.

beyond the scope of the present study – but rather, to examine the way in which there are still traces in Aquinas’s thought of the more ancient tradition, namely, of the connection between love and beauty.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, one of Schindler’s central arguments is that there is a certain tension in Aquinas’s account of love, which if resolved exclusively within the appetitive order of the good in a ‘one-sided way’ leads to the ‘shrinking’ of love, that is, to its relativisation to the subject and their possessive, or even selfish, pursuit of gratification.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we must bring to light the manner in which Aquinas also characterises love in ways that subtly, but decisively, exceed the appetitive order of the good, an aspect buried below the surface of his thought, which manifests the more ancient connection between love and beauty.<sup>21</sup> This is not to deny the connection between love and the good for Aquinas, but to set it within the more fundamental context of the principal connection between love and the beautiful, a context that relieves the tension within his characterisation of love, and does more justice to its diversity and analogous nature.<sup>22</sup>

First, we will give a general outline of Aquinas’s understanding of the power of appetite, and the way in which he differentiates between *natural*, *sensitive*, and *intellectual* appetite, in order to lay the foundation for our discussion in this chapter. Secondly, we will examine the ways in which Aquinas’s characterisation of love transcends the appetitive order of the good and desire. Thirdly, and finally, we will demonstrate the way in which this characterisation fits more naturally with Aquinas’s understanding of the beautiful, and conclude by explaining the significance of this correlation of love and beauty in relation to both terms. Indeed, we will see that this correlation is integral to the preservation of the *moment of love* as an ontological

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<sup>19</sup> Schindler, ‘Love and Beauty,’ 336-37. Schindler proposes some reasons why Aquinas might have been committed to the association of love with goodness rather than with beauty in *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 104, n. 69.

<sup>20</sup> Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 90-91.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Cf. Schindler, ‘Love and Beauty,’ 336-37.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 91-92. Schindler (ibid., 96) speaks of a ‘drift’ in Aquinas’s formulations, in order to make it clear that whilst there are very good textual grounds for associating love with the appetitive order of the good, nevertheless, it is ‘fitting’ to see this aspect within a wider and more fundamental context, namely, the connection between love and beauty.

perfection in its own right, and it prevents this moment from being engulfed within the order of desire as a merely preparatory stage in the appetite's quest for its own satisfaction. Likewise, it is also integral to a proper elucidation of the relation that the beautiful 'adds' to being, which we will characterise as the 'ontological friendship' by which honour is shown to all of created being. By the end of this chapter, our analysis of transcendental beauty, as the *symphony of being*, will be complete, and we will conclude this study by considering some of the theological implications of our findings.

### *The difference of appetites*

Aquinas argues that love (*amor*) differs according to the difference of appetites, that is, according to the difference between the 'natural', 'sensitive', and 'rational' or 'intellectual' (i.e., the will) appetites, yet, in relation to all three, it is the 'principle of movement' (*principium motus*) in the appetitive tendency toward the good.<sup>23</sup> Before we examine this very important characterisation in more detail, first, it is necessary to situate the passage from which it comes within the context of Aquinas's thought concerning appetite more generally. This will provide an essential foundation upon which we will illustrate the ways in which his conception of love subtly transcends the appetitive order of the good. Moreover, our analysis will eventually illustrate the increasing importance of love – as we move upwards from the level of the natural to the sensitive, and then to the intellectual – as a moment of ontological importance in and of itself, which, we will argue, can fully be recognised and preserved only when correlated with the transcendental order of the beautiful. A helpful place to begin our analysis is the opening article of question 22 in *De veritate*.

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<sup>23</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1.

Aquinas argues that all things have an appetency and desire for the good – not only those which have knowledge, but also those things which lack cognitive faculties – because all natural things have been ordained and disposed to those effects which are agreeable and useful to their nature by God, the author and institutor of nature.<sup>24</sup> Whilst it is true that only those things which know the end can direct themselves to it, for that which directs must have knowledge of that to which they direct, nevertheless, those things which do not know the end can be determined to it by another. In this latter case, the ‘appetite’ or tendency toward the good in those things which lack knowledge follows upon an apprehension, not in the appetitive subject itself, but in another. For instance, a person can direct themselves to a particular location apprehended by themselves, but it is by means of the archer’s apprehension that the arrow is directed to its target. As such, it is axiomatic for Aquinas that *appetite follows apprehension*.<sup>25</sup> However, it is not necessary for appetite and its preceding apprehension to coincide in the same appetitive subject, as in the case of ‘natural appetite’, which occurs even in those things devoid of knowledge, who depend upon the direction of the divine intellect.<sup>26</sup>

Now, we can speak of one thing directing another in either a ‘violent’ or a ‘natural’ manner. For instance, the arrow is directed to a target by the archer in such a way that it is merely impelled and moved, without receiving from the archer a *form* by which such direction or inclination belongs to the arrow itself, so that we can describe this inclination as ‘violent’. By contrast, a ‘natural’ inclination belongs to that which is directed or inclined to an end by some *form* it acquires from the one directing or moving, that is, by a ‘natural principle’ according to which this natural inclination belongs to the thing inclined itself, as in the case of the one who has inclined the stone to be borne downwards naturally, namely, God, by giving the stone ‘heaviness’

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<sup>24</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1.

<sup>25</sup> *STh* I, q. 79, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>26</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1.

(*gravitas*).<sup>27</sup> Therefore, Aquinas concludes, all natural things are inclined to what is agreeable with their nature, by having in themselves some ‘principle of inclination’ (*inclinatio principium*), by reason of which their inclination is natural, such that they are not merely led to their due ends, but in a certain manner tend to them of themselves.<sup>28</sup> For, those things which are moved ‘violently’ contribute nothing to the mover – as in the case of the arrow, which is merely impelled toward the target – whereas those things which move to their ends ‘naturally’ are said to co-operate with the one inclining and directing them through a naturally implanted principle in them – as in the case of the stone, which is borne downwards by the intrinsic heaviness of its natural form.<sup>29</sup> In other words, the difference between a violent and a natural movement depends upon whether the *formal principle* of motion or inclination in the thing moved is extrinsic or intrinsic.

Moreover, since it is God, the first mover, who directs and inclines all natural things in this way, then that to which everything is naturally inclined must be that which is willed or intended by him, which can be nothing other than himself, the very essence of goodness itself (for God has no end other than himself), so that all things are naturally inclined to some good.<sup>30</sup> As such, Aquinas argues that desire or appetency (*appetere*) is nothing other than to seek (*petere*) something, a tending, as it were, toward something which is ordained for oneself, which is why it is said in the Book of Wisdom (viii. 1) that the divine wisdom ‘orders all things sweetly’, for each thing by its own motion tends to that for which it has been divinely ordained.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, God has so ordered creation that all natural things have an intrinsic ‘principle of inclination’ by which they tend to the good, as if seeking it themselves,

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<sup>27</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Simon Oliver, *Philosophy, God and motion*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 88ff.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 103, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>30</sup> This means that all things naturally desire God implicitly. See *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 2; *STh* I, q. 6, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>31</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1. Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 8, a. 1.

rather than merely being led to the good, and so it must be said that, by virtue of this intrinsic formal principle, all things naturally desire the good.

Furthermore, Aquinas observes that, whereas, on the one hand, some inclination follows every form – as fire, by its form, is inclined to rise and generate its like – however, on the other hand, form is found in things that participate in knowledge in a higher way than it is in things which lack knowledge.<sup>32</sup> In those things that are devoid of knowledge, there is found only a form that determines each thing to its proper being and nature, and upon this natural form follows a natural inclination, namely, ‘natural appetite’. However, in those things that have knowledge, each thing is determined to its own natural being through a natural form, which is nevertheless receptive of the *species* of other things too. For instance, the senses receive the *species* of all things sensible, and the intellect of all things intelligible, so that, as Aristotle argued, the human soul is in a certain manner *all things* through sense and intellect, and, as Dionysius argued, those things that have knowledge approach the likeness of God, in whom all things pre-exist.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, just as forms exist in a higher way in those who have knowledge – that is, above the *real* mode of natural form, and in the *intentional* mode of a *species* or likeness of the thing known, which is in the knower according to the mode of the knower – likewise, there must be in them an inclination above the level of ‘natural appetite’, namely, ‘animal appetite’, which belongs to the appetitive power of the soul, by which the animal can desire what it apprehends, and not only that to which it is inclined by its natural form.

The difference between natural and animal appetite can be underlined by considering the difference between any particular power of the soul and the animal to which that power belongs.<sup>34</sup> For instance, each power of the soul is a form or nature, and so has a natural inclination to something, as sight has a natural inclination to the visible, for *some inclination follows every form*. As such, each power naturally desires

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<sup>32</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 1 ad 3.

that object which agrees with its natural appetite. Above this, however, is the animal appetite, which follows upon the apprehension of something, whether by sight or hearing, for instance, and by which something is desired, not because it is in agreement with any particular apprehensive power, but because it is agreeable to the animal *simpliciter*, that is, to the being taken as a whole.<sup>35</sup> For instance, when the lion sees the lamb, according to its *animal* appetite, the lion desires the lamb insofar as it is the food by which it can preserve its nature, and not because the vision of the lamb is the good of its sense of sight.<sup>36</sup>

As such, to be moved according to appetite is common to both animate and inanimate beings in a general sense, but in a particular sense it is proper to animate beings, so that it is necessary to assign animal appetite as a special power of the soul.<sup>37</sup> As Aquinas explains, spiritual things absolutely have the nature to move, but not to be moved, whereas bodies are indeed moved, and although one can move another (as in the case of the falling stone which may smash the stone upon which it falls) none can move itself. This is because those things which move themselves must be divided into at least two parts, the mover and the moved, as Aristotle argues in Book VIII of the *Physics*. This cannot apply to purely corporeal and inanimate things, because their forms cannot be movers, even though they can be the 'principle of motion' (*motus principium*), as that by which something is moved, as in the movement of a stone, the heaviness or 'gravity' of the stone is the principle by which it is moved, but is not the mover itself.<sup>38</sup> This is the case both because of the simplicity of inanimate beings, which necessitates that there is not the diversity of parts whereby one can be the mover and the other the moved, and also because of the lack of nobility consequent upon the materiality of their forms, which are far removed from separate forms (which

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 78, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, whilst the senses of irrational animals naturally desire their proper objects, as sight naturally desires the visible, Aquinas maintains that such animals cannot take pleasure in these operations, except insofar as they relate to the preservation of the individual's nature. For example, see *STh* II-II, q. 141, a. 4 ad 3.

<sup>37</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 3.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

are the cause of movement), such that they do not retain the ability to move, but only the ability to be the principles of movement. By contrast, animate things are composed of a spiritual and a corporeal nature, so there can be a diversity of parts in them, whereby one is the mover, and the other is the moved. Therefore, to be moved and to desire (*appetere*), which in a certain manner is common to all things, becomes special to animals insofar as in them is found both appetite, and also that which moves the appetite to determinate species of movement, namely, the apprehended good.

Moreover, Aquinas makes a further distinction within animal appetite, namely, between the 'sensitive' and the 'rational', and he argues that the rational appetite is distinguished from the sensitive appetite in the same way as the sensitive appetite is distinguished from the natural appetite, namely, because of its more perfect 'mode of tending' (*modum appetendi*).<sup>39</sup> He explains this in terms of the proximity of a certain nature to the dignity and freedom of God, to whom it belongs to move, incline, and direct all things, without being moved, inclined, or directed himself by any other. In other words, the nearer a nature is to God, the less is it inclined by another, and the more it is inclined of its own freedom. For instance, an insensitive or inanimate nature is the farthest removed from God by virtue of its materiality, and whilst it is inclined to an end, it has nothing within itself that inclines, but only a 'principle of inclination', as we explained above. By contrast, a sensitive nature is closer to God, because it has something within itself that inclines, namely, the form of the apprehended appetible object, although this inclination itself is not within the power of the animal that is inclined, but is determined by something else. For instance, at the sight of something pleasant, an animal is not able to not crave that thing, because animals do not have mastery over their own inclination, since they do not have a superior counteracting rational appetite.<sup>40</sup> In this way, it is more accurate to say that irrational animals are acted upon, rather than that they act, because the sensitive appetite has a bodily organ

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<sup>39</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 81, a. 3.

so that it is closer to the condition of matter and corporeal things, and is moved rather than a mover.

By contrast, rational nature is closest to God, because it not only has an inclination to something, as inanimate beings do, nor is this inclination determined by something else, as in sensitive natures, but in addition to this, it also has the inclination itself in its own power, so that it is not necessary for it to incline to the apprehended appetible object.<sup>41</sup> That is, it can incline or not incline, so that its inclination is not determined for it by another, but by itself.<sup>42</sup> This belongs to the rational nature insofar as it is not restricted to the use of a bodily organ, and in this way it departs from the nature of the merely moveable, and approaches the nature of the agent mover. This freedom and self-determination in relation to an end is dependent upon the subject having knowledge of the end, and the relationship between the end and those things oriented to that end, which is the province of reason.<sup>43</sup> As such, the appetite not determined to something else of necessity follows the apprehension of reason, which is the 'rational appetite', or the will, which differs from the power of the 'sensitive appetite'. As Aquinas explains in the *Summa theologiae*, the appetitive power is a passive power, which is naturally moved by the thing apprehended, so that the apprehended appetible object is a mover which is not moved, while the appetite is a moved mover.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, whether the appetible object is apprehended by sense or intellect is not accidental to it as a mover, for the appetible object does not move the appetite except insofar as it is apprehended, whereby differences in relation to the thing apprehended are *per se* differences of the appetible object, so that the appetitive

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<sup>41</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, Aquinas explains that 'natural necessity' is not repugnant to the will, for as the intellect of necessity adheres to first principles, the will must of necessity adhere to the last end, namely, happiness, since the end is to operation what principles are to speculation. Crucially, the free choice of the will regards not the end, but the means to the end. See *STh* I, q. 82, a. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 82, a. 2 ad 3: 'vis sensitiva non est vis collativa diversorum, sicut ratio, sed simpliciter aliquid unum apprehendit. Et ideo secundum illud unum determinate movet appetitum sensitivum. Sed ratio est collativa plurium, et ideo ex pluribus moveri potest appetitus intellectivus, scilicet voluntas, et non ex uno ex necessitate.'

<sup>44</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 2.

powers are distinguished according to the differences of the things apprehended as their proper objects.<sup>45</sup> The senses apprehend the particular and singular, whereas the intellect apprehends the general and universal, and although the intellectual appetite tends to individual things existing outside of the soul, it tends to them as standing under the universal, as when it desires something because it is good.<sup>46</sup> Although the intellectual appetite or will is naturally inclined toward the good, nevertheless, because the good is of many kinds, the will is not of necessity determined to any one good thing in particular.<sup>47</sup>

Several features of this very brief outline are worth underlining by way of summary. First, in general terms, a preceding apprehension is the formal principle of appetite, but this apprehension does not necessarily exist *in* the appetitive subject themselves, which may be inclined towards its natural end because of an apprehension existing in the divine intellect. This is the case in what Aquinas calls the ‘natural appetite’ of all natural things. Secondly, all natural things are indeed directed to their natural ends by God by virtue of an intrinsic form, which is the ‘principle of inclination’ of their *natural* movement to the end appointed for them, such that they are not merely impelled in a *violent* or extrinsic manner.

Thirdly, in those things which participate in knowledge, their natural form is also receptive of the forms or *species* of others. The reception of these forms by the apprehensive powers of the subject is the principle of ‘animal appetite’, which is a special power of the soul. In other words, if natural appetite simply is the inclination that is consequent upon the natural form of the being itself, animal appetite is an appetite above this, because it is consequent, not upon the natural form of the animal *per se*, but upon a form that has been apprehended by the cognitive powers of the soul. As such, it is an appetite in relation to something that is other to the nature and form

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<sup>45</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 2 ad 1.

<sup>46</sup> *STh* I, q. 80, a. 2 ad 2. The intellectual appetite can also desire immaterial goods, which are not apprehended by sense, such as knowledge and virtue, i.e., that which is intrinsically universal and general.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 82, a. 2 ad 1 & 2; I-II, q. 10, aa. 1, 2.

of the appetitive subject, and so it is superior to natural appetite, because it allows the animal to desire what it apprehends, and not simply that to which it has been determined according to nature. Thus, whereas the natural form of an inanimate nature is merely the 'principle of motion', that is, that by which it is moved, by contrast, in animate natures we find not only that which is moved, namely, appetite, but also that which moves the appetite to determinate species of movement, namely, the form of the apprehended good.

Fourthly, we can divide animal appetite into its sensitive and intellectual dimensions. The sensitive appetite is characterised by necessity, insofar as the inclination that results from the form of the apprehended sensible good is not within the power of the animal that is inclined. By contrast, the intellectual appetite is characterised by liberty, insofar as the inclination that results from the form of the apprehended intelligible good is within its power. We can unite these various points in the following way: a preceding apprehension is the general *formal* principle of movement in all kinds of appetite, and appetite itself is diversified according to the nature of that apprehension.

Therefore, we can make an observation that will serve as the basis for our argument in this chapter concerning the ontological significance of the moment of love, and its correlation to the transcendental order of the beautiful. That is, we can summarise the three forms of appetite outlined above in terms of the following scheme: (1) a one-dimensional *connatural* in the 'natural appetite'; (2) a two-dimensional *necessity* in the 'sensitive appetite'; and (3) a three-dimensional *liberty* in the 'intellectual appetite' or will.

The one-dimensional connaturalness of the natural appetite is evident from the fact that the good to which a natural thing tends according to this kind of appetite is one, determinate, and uniform.<sup>48</sup> To take Aquinas's example above, a stone has

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<sup>48</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 3, ad 3: 'bonum in quod tendit appetitus naturalis, est determinatum et uniforme'. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 3, ad 5: 'appetitus naturalis est determinatus ad unum'.

heaviness according to its form, which is the natural and intrinsic 'principle of inclination' by which it is naturally borne downwards. This appetitive tendency of the stone is not consequent upon an apprehension in the stone itself, rather, it is *connatural* to the form of what the stone *is*. In other words, the inclination downwards is simply what it *is* to have the form and nature of a stone, and only a 'violent' motion, such as a person holding the stone in their hand, will interrupt this 'natural' inclination. Whereas the actual movement or rest in the connatural end of the stone is *accidental* to its nature, for the stone is still a stone if it is held in one's hand and prevented from being borne downwards, nevertheless, it is *essential* to the stone's identity that it is always in a state of being inclined to that end. Therefore, the natural appetite of the stone is consequent upon the apprehension in the divine intellect of the 'idea' of the stone, a likeness of which the stone itself participates according to its natural form.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, in natural appetite there is not the distinction in the appetitive subject themselves between that which is moved, namely, appetite, and that which moves, namely, the form of the apprehended good. Rather, the two coincide in the one-dimensional *connaturality* of the appetitive subject simply to naturally incline to the end that is in accordance with its natural form.

The two-dimensional aspect of the sensitive appetite is evident from the fact that the distinction between mover and that which is moved does exist in the subject itself, so that the sensitive appetite itself becomes a special power of the soul that is distinct from (although intrinsically related to) the subject's natural form. However, there is a sense in which this distinction is flattened, so to speak, by the fact that, upon the form of the apprehended sensible good, the consequent movement of the appetite follows by *necessity*; that is, there is no sense in which the two moments can be held

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<sup>49</sup> For Aquinas's theory of the divine 'ideas', see *STh* I, q. 15, for example. The same could be said of the cognitive powers such as the sense of sight and the intellect. These have a natural appetite for their proper object, namely, the visible and the true, respectively, but their appetite for these objects arises not from a preceding apprehension in the power of sight or intellect themselves, but in God. Indeed, properly speaking, it is not the sense nor the intellect which knows, but a person knows by sense and intellect.

apart as significant in their own right; the one is a function of the other within the same appetitive order. The sensitive appetite's movement toward, and rest in, the sensible good are consequent upon the subject's apprehension of that object, but they follow necessarily.

The three-dimensional *liberty* of the intellectual appetite or will in relation to the rational and universal good is evident from the fact that, although we find the same distinction in the appetitive subject as we found in the sensitive appetite, namely, between mover and that which is moved, unlike in irrational animals, the rational appetitive subject has its inclination toward that which it apprehends within its own power and freedom. In other words, the apprehension of the appetible good is not simply a function of the subject's appetitive pursuit. It can be a moment that has significance in and of itself, without being circumscribed within the horizon of the appetite's pursuit of satisfaction. We might say that a distance opens up at the level of the will, so that the subject can relate to the apprehended appetible object in a novel way. We will return to this point later in this chapter, when we consider the correlation between love and the beautiful in Aquinas's thought. However, before we do so, in light of the preceding discussion, we must consider the ways in which Aquinas's conception of love transcends the appetitive order of the good.

### *Love and the good*

As we noted at the beginning of the previous section in this chapter, Aquinas characterises love as the 'principle of movement' (*principium motus*) in the appetitive order of the good.<sup>50</sup> He explores this theme at the beginning of his particular treatment of love (*amor*) in his treatise on the passions in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>51</sup> However, seen

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<sup>50</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Although Aquinas conducts his most extensive treatment of love in the context of his treatise on the passions, it is immediately clear from his discussion that love is an analogous concept, which is

in the light of our analysis thus far, it becomes clear that this characterisation of love fits more naturally in the order of formal causality, which precedes the appetitive relation to the good in the order of final causality, so that love transcends that relation as its proximate cause.<sup>52</sup>

Aquinas begins his particular treatment of love by stating that it is something ‘pertaining’ to the appetite, since the object of both is the good, and so love differs according to the difference of appetites.<sup>53</sup> He enumerates the three kinds of appetite that we outlined in the previous section, namely, ‘natural’, ‘sensitive’, and ‘rational’ or ‘intellectual’ (i.e., the will), and explains that each is distinguished insofar as it is *consequent* upon a preceding apprehension in different ways. First, ‘natural’ appetite is consequent upon an apprehension not in the appetitive subject itself, but rather in the one who instituted nature, namely, God, whereby all natural things seek what is agreeable according to their nature.<sup>54</sup> Secondly, ‘sensitive’ appetite is consequent upon the apprehension of the appetitive subject itself, and arises from necessity and not from free judgement in irrational animals, although in human beings it has some participation in freedom insofar as it obeys reason.<sup>55</sup> Thirdly, and finally, ‘rational’ or ‘intellectual’ appetite is consequent upon the apprehension of the appetitive subject, and is exercised according to free judgement.

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not limited to the sensitive appetite, the ‘seat of the passions’, but is essential to his understanding of appetite in inanimate and rational creatures too. For the analogical attribution of love to God and purely spiritual beings, who, being incorporeal, have no passions, see *STh* I, q. 82, a. 5 ad 1; I-II, q. 22, a. 3 ad 3, for example. Nevertheless, it is significant that his treatment of the passions forms the context for his most extensive treatment of love, which underlines the receptive character of love, and the fact that it gathers together the *whole* person, body and soul, intellect and will.

<sup>52</sup> Schindler, ‘Love and Beauty,’ 341; *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 97.

<sup>53</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1. Cf. ‘[Love] is connected with appetite in some way, without necessarily being identified with it or having its proper place simply *inside* of appetite. In other words, to say that love “pertains to” appetite is not exactly to say that it *is* appetite *simpliciter*, though it would seem that this latter formulation would necessarily follow if we defined love *just* as relation to the good, since goodness is finality, that toward which all things strive.’ Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 97.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 103, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 2.

Having briefly outlined these three forms of appetite, Aquinas argues that, in relation to each, *love* is the name given to the ‘principle of movement’ in their tending toward the end that is loved.<sup>56</sup> In the case of the natural appetite, the principle of this kind of movement is the ‘connaturality’ (*connaturalitas*) of the appetitive subject with that towards which it tends, namely, ‘natural love’. For instance, it belongs to the very nature of a heavy body to move downwards according to its heaviness or weight, and this *con-naturalitas* can be called the natural love of the heavy body.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, in the case of both the sensitive appetite (which regards the sensible good, under the aspect of the singular and particular), and also the intellectual appetite or will (which regards the intelligible good, under the aspect of the general and universal), the ‘co-appetite’ (*coaptatio*) or proportion with some particular good, that is the appetite’s very ‘complacency in good’ (*complacentia boni*), is called ‘sensitive love’ or ‘intellectual love’, respectively.

We will return, in a moment, to the important characterisation of love as, on the one hand, the *connaturalitas* of the appetitive subject for the good towards which it tends according to ‘natural appetite’, and on the other hand, the *co-appetite* of either the ‘sensitive’ or ‘intellectual’ appetite to some good, that is, their very *complacency* in the good. However, before we do so, we can make an initial observation, namely, that it is very significant that Aquinas defines love, not as the *movement* of the appetite toward the good, but as the *principle* of that movement. By contrast, in article two of the preceding question in his treatise on the passions, he argues that *desire* is the movement of the appetite towards the good.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, in the *Prima Pars*, Aquinas has already argued that the appetitive part of the soul is named from the movement of desire, by which the appetite seeks what it does not yet possess,<sup>59</sup> and that the appetite

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<sup>56</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1: ‘In unoquoque autem horum appetituum, amor dicitur illud quod est principium motus tendentis in finem amatum.’

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 1 ad 3; q. 27, a. 2 ad 3.

<sup>58</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2: ‘motus autem ad bonum est desiderium vel concupiscentia.’

<sup>59</sup> *STh* I, q. 19, a. 1 ad 2. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1.

itself is a kind of movement.<sup>60</sup> What this means, then, is that love is the preceding *principle* of the appetite's characteristic and proper *movement* of desire. Indeed, Aquinas explicitly argues that love is naturally the first act or movement of the will and of every appetitive power, that which is presupposed as the 'primary root' of all other appetitive movements,<sup>61</sup> and so, 'love *precedes* desire'.<sup>62</sup> However, to say that love precedes the appetitive movement of desire is tantamount to saying that love precedes the order of the good, insofar as that order is actualised in the operations of the soul.<sup>63</sup> We recall, the good is defined as 'what all desire' (*quod omnia appetunt*), and this 'aspect of desirability' (*rationem appetibilis*) is what the good 'adds' to being.<sup>64</sup> In other words, desire is the soul's relation to being according to its power of appetite in the order of the good.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, far from being circumscribed within the appetitive order of the good, love precedes this order (the order of desire) as its principle. As Schindler argues, the principle of any motion transcends that motion as its cause; if appetite is a movement toward the good, then love *pertains* to appetite, whilst also *transcending* appetite as its principle.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, whilst love in some way pertains to the appetite, it also seems to have the character of a preceding *formal* principle in relation to the appetite. As we saw in the previous section, it is axiomatic for Aquinas that *appetite follows apprehension*, and so, that which functions as the principle of the appetite's movement toward the good is a preceding act of apprehension.<sup>67</sup> For instance, in terms of the natural appetite of all things for the good, it is the natural *form* of a being, apprehended by the divine intellect, that is its intrinsic 'principle of inclination'. Likewise, it is the reception, in the appetitive subject, of the *form* of the apprehended appetible object

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<sup>60</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1: 'appetitus est quasi quidam motus ad rem.'

<sup>61</sup> *STh* I, q. 20, a. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2: 'amor praecedat desiderium'. My emphasis.

<sup>63</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 341.

<sup>64</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 21, a. 1.

<sup>65</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 97.

<sup>67</sup> See *STh* I, q. 79, a. 1 ad 2; q. 80, a. 1 ad 3; q. 80, a. 2; q. 82, a. 4 ad 3.

which is that upon which the movement of the sensitive and intellectual appetites depend. Furthermore, in his discussion of love as the appetite's *principium motus*, it is upon the very basis of a preceding act of apprehension that Aquinas differentiates between the natural, sensitive, and intellectual appetites, according to which love is also differentiated as the principle of movement. Therefore, this would suggest that, in some way, love *precedes* the appetitive order of the good as its *formal principle*. This is confirmed by the fact that, when Aquinas does characterise love as having a certain kind of movement, he emphasises that this is a movement that not only precedes the proper movement of the appetite in the order of the good, but that it is also one that moves in the *opposite direction* of that order.<sup>68</sup>

He begins by observing that a natural agent brings about a twofold effect on the patient: first, the agent gives the patient a certain *form*; secondly, it gives the *movement* that is consequent upon that form.<sup>69</sup> For instance, the generator gives the generated body both weight (i.e., form), and also the movement that results from that weight, so that weight itself, which is the 'principle of motion' to the place that is 'connatural' to that weight, in a certain manner can be called 'natural love'. In this example, Aquinas makes an explicit link between 'natural love' and the formal principle of weight in a heavy body, which, as we saw in the previous section, he describes as the intrinsic 'principle of inclination' in the natural appetite of a stone. As such, natural love is identified with the formal principle of movement, and not with the movement that follows upon that principle. That is, 'natural love' is the 'connaturality' of the natural appetitive subject to be formally disposed toward that which is the good of its natural form.

Similarly, he continues, in relation to the sensitive and intellectual appetites, first, the appetible object *gives to the appetite* a certain 'co-adaptation' (*coaptatio*) to itself, which is the appetite's 'complacency' in the appetible object, and secondly, from this

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<sup>68</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 2. Cf. Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 341-42.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 23, a. 4.

follows the movement of the appetite towards the appetible object.<sup>70</sup> By analogy with the example just given above, this moment of co-adaptation, whereby the appetible object gives the appetite complacency in itself, is a moment in which a *form* is given to the appetite, from which a certain movement of the appetite toward the appetible object follows. Accordingly, Aquinas argues that love is the first change (*immutatio*) of the appetite by the appetible object, which is nothing other than the appetite's complacency in the appetible object, and from this complacency follows the appetite's movement toward the appetible object, namely, desire, which ultimately ends in rest, namely, joy.<sup>71</sup> In other words, Aquinas identifies the movement of love with the giving of form, and not with the movement that results from that form, which, in turn, is the movement of desire. This *immutatio* of the appetite by the appetible object, somehow, is a reception of form, not in the apprehensive powers, as in the order of the true, but in the appetite, and in such a way that it is distinguishable from the appetite's consequent movement of desire in the order of the good.<sup>72</sup> It is an interior change whereby the appetite becomes adapted to the appetible object, so that it acquires a complacency in that object, and the movement of desire follows from this in a subsequent stage.

As Schindler argues, this means that love is not the first in a series of similar acts, it is not the first movement toward the good, which is then followed by a second (desire) and a third (pleasure) in the same direction; rather, it is a movement of a

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<sup>70</sup> 'Love is the moment of adaptation, not the movement itself.' Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 97.

<sup>71</sup> Aquinas concludes the article by arguing that, since love consists in a certain *immutatio* of the appetite by the appetible object, it is evident that it is a passion (i.e., the effect of the agent on the patient), properly so insofar as it is in the 'concupiscible faculty' of the sensitive appetite (which regards the sensible good *simpliciter*, in contrast to the 'irascible faculty', which regards the sensible good under the aspect of its attainment being arduous or difficult), and in a wider sense by an extension of the name insofar as it is in the will.

<sup>72</sup> Interestingly, the word *immutatio* is used by Aquinas to denote the spiritual change, as opposed to the natural change, of the apprehensive powers, the very change which enables them to know in the first place. See *STh* I, q. 78, a. 3; I-II, q. 22, a. 2 ad 3. Accordingly, love is an *immutatio*, not of the cognitive powers, but of the appetite.

fundamentally different kind, because it is in the opposite direction of all the other movements of the appetite.<sup>73</sup> As Aquinas puts it in the reply to the third objection:

Although love does not denote the movement of the appetite in tending towards the appetible object [*motum appetitus tendentem in appetibile*], yet it denotes that movement whereby the appetite is changed by the appetible object [*appetitus quo immutatur ab appetibili*], so as to have complacency therein.<sup>74</sup>

As we have seen, appetite is the soul's movement in the order of final causality toward the good, namely, the appetible object. This is the movement of desire, which comes to rest in pleasure. However, what Aquinas is arguing above is that the movement of love occurs in the opposite direction, that is, *in the movement of the appetible object toward the soul*, whereby the latter is changed and co-adapted (*co-aptatio*) by the former. Schindler argues that this represents a movement of a radically different order in comparison to the appetite's proper relation to the good: it is not a change of the appetite, that is, it is not a 'horizontal' change of place along the line that crosses the distance between subject and object, rather, it is a 'vertical' change *in* the nature of the appetite itself.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, in *De veritate* Aquinas describes this as a formal specification of the appetite by the appetible object, which we might characterise as effecting a connection between the orders of formal and final causality: the appetible object is first 'conjoined' with the appetitive subject by being apprehended as like or agreeable to them, and from this follows love, which is nothing other than a certain 'formation of the appetite' by the appetible object (*formatio quaedam appetitus ab ipso appetibili*), for which reason love is said to be a certain union of the lover and the beloved.<sup>76</sup>

As Michael S. Sherwin, O.P. observes, it is particularly a feature of Aquinas's early work that he describes the nature of love in terms of the language of form.<sup>77</sup> For

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<sup>73</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 341.

<sup>74</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 2, ad 3.

<sup>75</sup> Schindler, *The Postmodern Predicament*, 101.

<sup>76</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 26, a. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Michael S. Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), esp.

instance, in his commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, Aquinas argues that, when the affection or appetite is completely 'imbued' with the *form* of the good that is its object, it delights (*complacet*) in it, and adheres to it as if fixed in it, and in this respect it is said to love it, so that love is nothing other than a certain *transformation* of the affection into the thing loved.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, love signifies the 'termination of affection', that is, the 'information' of the affection by its object, and since all motion proceeds from that which is at rest, just as all discursive reasoning proceeds from principles, as movement from rest, likewise, every movement of affection proceeds from the *information*, rest and termination of the affection by love.<sup>79</sup> Likewise, Aquinas argues that, since everything is made one with that whose form it acquires, love makes the lover one with the beloved, for the latter becomes the form of the former.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, he argues that love itself is the 'union' or 'nexus' or 'transformation' by which the lover is 'transformed' into the beloved, and is in a certain way 'converted' into the beloved.<sup>81</sup>

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64-81. Cf. H. D. Simonin, 'Autour de la solution thomiste du problème de l'amour,' *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 6 (1931): 181.

<sup>78</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>79</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 3. Cf. 'Love is the form of the beloved existing in the appetite and in which the appetite rests.' Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, 66.

<sup>80</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. ad 4.

<sup>81</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1 ad 2. Sherwin argues that one of the shortcomings of this characterisation of love is that it makes it virtually indistinguishable from the proper activity of intellection. In other words, if the will receives the form, then why is it not also a cognitive faculty? Therefore, he argues further, as Aquinas more fully grasps the differentiated involvement of intellect and will in human action, he makes a clearer distinction between the activities proper to these powers of the soul. As such, when it comes to his analysis of love in the *Summa theologiae*, for instance, the language of form is replaced with the language of complacency, aptitude, inclination, or proportion, so that, whereas the object imparts its form in the cognitive powers, it imparts an affective proportion or inclination toward that form in the appetitive powers. See Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, 69ff. Cf. Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 90, n. 25. Nevertheless, as we have seen in our analysis, in the *Summa theologiae* Aquinas differentiates the 'movement of love' from the 'movement of desire', by arguing that the former arises from the appetible object giving the appetite a certain *form*, as the generator gives to the generated body *weight*, in contrast to the latter, which is defined as the movement that *results from that form* (*STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 2). Likewise, Aquinas also argues that the intellect moves the will as its formal principle, *by presenting its object to it* (*STh* I-II, q. 9, a. 1). This *presentation of a form* to the will by the intellect may not be a cognitive reception of an intelligible *species*, as happens in the cognitive order of the true, but it is certainly the giving of a form to the appetite, which it previously did not possess. Indeed, the result of this reception of form in the appetite is well described by Aquinas's language of complacency, aptitude, inclination, and proportion, which sufficiently differentiates this from the cognitive reception of form, but it is no less a question of the formal *specification* of the will in a certain respect.

Again, as Schindler argues, the movement of love is a moment of adaptation or attunement of the appetitive subject by the appetible object: if in the movement of desire, the appetible object is measured against the subject, as something that will bring satisfaction to the appetite, by contrast, in the movement of love, the appetite is changed so that it is made to fit the measure of the object, so as to take complacency in that object, which itself is the essential precondition and cause of all subsequent movements of desire toward the appetible object.<sup>82</sup> In other words, the movement of love is an interior *trans-formation* of the appetite, which precedes and brings to birth all the subsequent desires by which the soul relates to being in the appetitive order of the good.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, the movement of love as a formal specification and transformation is not simply the first step toward the appetite's acquisition of a desired end, that is, it is not wholly circumscribed within the order of the good, for Aquinas describes love as the complacency of the appetite in the appetible object, which is a certain union of the lover and the beloved. In this respect, the definition of love as *complacentia boni* is particularly rich. It has a quite different meaning from the contemporary signification of 'complacency' (i.e., a smug or self-satisfied disposition), and is derived from the verb *placere*, 'to please', by bringing to rest.<sup>84</sup> As Schindler notes, the prefix *con-* is both an intensifier, denoting an increased degree of pleasure, but also signifies an 'abiding difference' between the subject and object, such that to have complacency in another is to be pleased *with* that other as other in a bond of

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<sup>82</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 342. The way in which the appetible object 'gives' itself to be loved in this way prevents any dualism of subject and object, such as we find in modern philosophy.

<sup>83</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 6: 'omne agens, quodcumque sit, agit quamcumque actionem ex aliquo amore.' Schindler argues that the movement of love is a real change in the appetitive subject, one that involves a before and an after, which is something quite different from the simple movement from potency to act. It presupposes not a potency that is already ordered to actuality, but a potency that is capable of receiving a potency for a particular actuality, which he sees as an analogy in the natural order to what was later known as the 'obediential potency' in nature for grace. See *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 102, n. 63.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

affection.<sup>85</sup> As Aquinas argues, the union of lover and beloved is twofold: on the one hand, there is the 'real' union of the lover and the beloved, which consists in the 'conjunction' of one with the other, and this belongs to *joy* or *pleasure*, which follows desire in the order of the good; but on the other hand, there is the 'affective' union of the two, which consists in an aptitude or proportion or inclination, whereby the lover participates in something of the beloved, and this is *love*, which precedes the movement of *desire*.<sup>86</sup> In other words, to have 'complacency' in something is to be united with it *affectively*, and not *really*, thereby preserving the distinction between the two. Real union is what the appetitive subject aims at in the order of the good, but affective union is something quite different. In this sense, love is the aptitude or proportion of the appetite toward another, a complacency or affective disposition toward some appetible object, which is the pre-requisite for the appetitive movement of desire toward that end, and the pleasure taken in it once attained, but it is not reducible to these moments.<sup>87</sup> Instead, love is a taking pleasure in another as *other*.

As we saw above, Aquinas argues that, whereas, desire and pleasure regard the good under some special condition, that is, as either not yet present and possessed, or as present and possessed, respectively, by contrast love regards the good universally, whether possessed or not.<sup>88</sup> As such, the complacency of the lover in the beloved is not movement or rest in relation to an end, but the principle that enables both, because it is a reception of form. In this way, love is not a relation to an end in the order of the good, but a relation to a form. This is not quite the same as the reception of form in the *intentional* order of the true, which is received in the intellect according to an intelligible likeness or *species*, but a reception in the appetite, which thereby attunes the subject to the real existence of the object, for it is the 'primary root'

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<sup>85</sup> Schindler, *The Postmodern Predicament*, 95, fn. 43.

<sup>86</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2 ad 2.

<sup>87</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty', 339.

<sup>88</sup> *STh* I, q. 20, a. 1.

which enables the soul to desire in the first place, without love itself being identified with or reducible to that movement of desire.

That Aquinas's characterisation of love transcends the merely appetitive order of the good is particularly evident in the *direction* of love's movement. He elaborates the difference of this movement from the appetite's proper movement of desire toward the good with reference to Aristotle's image of the 'circle' in the acts of the soul: 'the appetible object moves the appetite, introducing itself, as it were, into its intention; while the appetite moves towards the realisation of the appetible object, so that the movement ends where it began.'<sup>89</sup> As we saw from our analysis of *De veritate* 1.1, Aquinas's anthropology of the soul provides a key framework within which he delineates the 'relational' transcendentals of the true and the good.<sup>90</sup> The soul has two powers, namely, intellect and will, and so the agreement of being with these two powers is expressed by the true and the good, respectively. Crucially, these two transcendental relationships differ in terms of the *direction* of the relation between being and the soul. As Aquinas explains in an important text in the *Summa theologiae*:

As the good denotes that towards which the appetite tends, so the true denotes that towards which the intellect tends. Now there is this difference between the appetite and the intellect, or any knowledge whatsoever, that knowledge is according as the thing known is in the knower, whilst appetite is according as the desirer tends towards the thing desired. Thus the term of the appetite, namely good, is in the object desirable, and the term of the intellect, namely true, is in the intellect itself.<sup>91</sup>

In other words, the motion or operation of the cognitive powers terminates in the soul, whereas that of the appetitive powers terminates in things themselves. In *De veritate* 1.2, Aquinas develops this point in connection with Aristotle's idea of the circle in the acts of the soul.<sup>92</sup> In the first instance, he argues, a thing which is outside the soul moves the intellect, and then subsequently the thing which is understood moves the appetite, so that the appetite itself tends to reach the thing from which the movement

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<sup>89</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 2. Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 2; *STh* I, q. 16, a. 1.

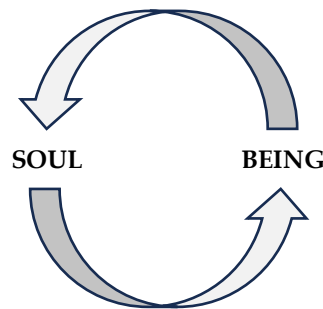
<sup>90</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6.

<sup>91</sup> *STh* I, q. 16, a. 1.

<sup>92</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 2.

began. Therefore, because the good denotes the relation of being to the appetite, whereas the true denotes the relation of being to the intellect, Aristotle states in *Metaphysics*, VI that good and evil are in things (*in rebus*), whereas truth and falsity are in the mind (*in mente*).<sup>93</sup> We can represent this idea as follows:

*The apprehensive order of the true*



*The appetitive order of the good*

As Schindler observes, in light of this wider framework, Aquinas's conception of love is strangely *paradoxical*.<sup>94</sup> On the one hand, love is defined as the first act or movement of the will and every appetitive power, the very complacency, aptitude, and proportion of the appetite in the appetible object, and therefore the principle and root of its *outward* movement of desire toward its proper object, namely, the good, which is in things, and in which the appetite takes rest and pleasure. Love 'pertains' to the appetite. On the other hand, as the movement of the appetible object toward the appetite, whereby the former changes and 'co-adapts' the latter, love also has a *receptive* character, which is strikingly similar to the act of the intellect and the other apprehensive powers.<sup>95</sup> Whereas the appetitive relation of the soul toward being

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 342.

<sup>95</sup> 'If love is a motion that precedes appetite, a motion that terminates in the soul as the *inmutatio appetitus*, the *inward transformation* of the appetite, then love appears to have the form of an intellectual act more than it does an act of appetite.' Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 342-43. The receptive aspect of love has been highlighted by Frederick Crowe, 'Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas,' *Theological Studies* 20 (1959): 1-39, 198-230, 343-95.

terminates in things themselves (*in rebus*), the act of the apprehensive powers terminates in the soul (*in mente*). As such, the receptive character of love seems to fit, at least in part, more naturally within the order of the true, which is the relation of being toward the soul. Therefore, Schindler concludes that love appears to be an 'odd hybrid', in some way simultaneously apprehensive and appetitive, an experience in which the intellect and will seem to be acting not like themselves, but like one another, and where the characteristic boundaries of the good and the true are transgressed.<sup>96</sup>

That love is characterised as belonging not only to the appetitive order, but also to the apprehensive order, is also reflected in other aspects of Aquinas's treatment of the subject. For instance, he argues that we find four words that pertain to the same thing in various ways, namely, 'love' (*amor*), 'dilection' (*dilectio*), 'charity' (*caritas*), and 'friendship' (*amicitia*), each of which contains an essential connection with reason.<sup>97</sup> First, *amor*, which, as we have already seen, Aquinas describes as the *principium motus* in the appetite. Our discussion has demonstrated that the general principle of appetite in Aquinas's thought is apprehension, which is indeed the very aspect he employs in order to differentiate the way in which love is the interior 'principle of inclination' in the natural, sensitive, and intellectual appetites.<sup>98</sup> Secondly, *dilectio*, which implies, in addition to *amor*, a prior choice (*electionem*), so that both are expressed by way of act or passion, but the latter has a wider signification than the former, for choice implies something pertaining to the reason or intellect,<sup>99</sup> and so *dilectio* is not found in the concupiscible faculty of the sensitive appetite, but only in the rational nature of the will. Thirdly, *amicitia* is like a habit, Aquinas argues, and elsewhere he explains that the love of friendship (*amore amicitiae*) arises from a kind of *apprehension* of the unity of the lover and the beloved, so that 'when a man loves another with the love of

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<sup>96</sup> Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 343.

<sup>97</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 3. Cf. Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 98-99.

<sup>98</sup> 'Designating love as a principle of motion, rather than being itself a motion *simply*, would seem to connect it in some way with the apprehensive power.' Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 98.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 1.

friendship, he wills good to him, just as he wills good to himself: wherefore he apprehends him as his other self'.<sup>100</sup> Fourthly, and finally, *caritas*, which adds to the notion of *amor* a certain perfection of love, insofar as that which is loved is highly esteemed, as the name itself implies (*caritas* is derived from *carus*, 'dear'). Elsewhere, Aquinas argues that friendship is founded upon some kind of communication, and that the love which is based upon this kind of communication is *caritas*, and since God communicates his happiness to us, charity is 'the friendship of man for God'.<sup>101</sup> Accordingly, *caritas* analogically shares in *amore amicitiae*, namely, it involves a similar *apprehension* of the unity between the lover and the beloved, as our friendship with God involves an apprehension of our unity with him.

Likewise, there is a dual reference to both the appetitive and the apprehensive powers in the first three 'effects' of love delineated by Aquinas, namely, 'union', 'mutual indwelling', and 'ecstasy'.<sup>102</sup> For example, Aquinas argues that the union of the lover and the beloved 'arises from a kind of apprehension of the oneness of the thing loved with the lover'.<sup>103</sup> As Schindler points out, Aquinas is not just saying that there is an act of apprehension prior to the act of love – which, of course, there is, in the order of the true – but also that in the act of love there is the simultaneity of an apprehensive and an appetitive moment, such that the act of love includes the act of both these powers.<sup>104</sup> For example, Aquinas argues that *when (cum)* we love something, as if *desiring* it, we *apprehend* it as pertaining to our well-being, just as *when (cum)* we love another with the love of friendship, we *will* good to our friend, just as we will

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<sup>100</sup> See *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 1. As Schindler observes, in this respect, love cannot be characterised merely as an appetitive willing of some good, rather, it designates a prior context within which the appetitive acts unfold, because it is first a context that has been apprehended as belonging to us. See *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 98.

<sup>101</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 23, a. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Schindler describes these as the 'principal effects', not simply because they are the first enumerated, but because they particularly reveal something about the nature of love. See *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 98, n. 57.

<sup>103</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 1.

<sup>104</sup> Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 99.

good to ourselves, therefore *apprehending* our friend as our other self.<sup>105</sup> That is, *when* we love, we are not only taking an appetitive complacency in the beloved, but also simultaneously apprehending our unity with the beloved. Granted, in the very next article, Aquinas states that the apprehension of reason precedes the affection of love.<sup>106</sup> However, as we have demonstrated above, the moment of love is a reception of form in the appetite, and not in the intellect. Therefore, we can say that there is both an apprehensive moment that precedes love, which also extends into the appetite where it is simultaneously held together with the beginning of the appetitive movement of love. In other words, the act of love is not entirely circumscribed within the order of the good as simply an act of the appetite, which is merely preceded by an act of the apprehensive powers in the order of the true. Rather, love is the coincidence of apprehension and appetition.

We will consider the paradigmatic importance of union in relation to love in the next section of this chapter. However, we will briefly conclude this section by observing that the same simultaneity of an apprehensive and appetitive moment is evident in Aquinas's treatment of the next two effects of love, namely, mutual indwelling and ecstasy. For instance, he argues that the 'effect of mutual indwelling may be understood as referring both to the apprehensive and to the appetitive power.'<sup>107</sup> Likewise, he also argues that, 'To suffer ecstasy means to be placed outside oneself. This happens as to the apprehensive power and as to the appetitive power.'<sup>108</sup> As Schindler argues, all three of these effects resist the one-sided interpretation of love as a merely unilateral relationship of the subject seeking the object of its satisfaction.<sup>109</sup> Thus, it is clear that Aquinas's conception of love cannot be circumscribed entirely within the appetitive order of the good in a reductive manner, and that it transcends that order in subtly important ways. Whilst there are elements of this conception that

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<sup>105</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 1.

<sup>106</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 2 ad 2.

<sup>107</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 2.

<sup>108</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Schindler, *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 99.

pertain to the appetitive order, the apprehensive order of formal causality seems to be no less important too. Therefore, as we look below the surface of some of Aquinas's statements about the relation between love and the good, a certain conclusion presents itself with a subtle and implicit forcefulness: *love is the soul's relation to beauty*.

### *Love and the beautiful*

When we look below the surface of certain statements that Aquinas makes about the relation between love and the good, it becomes clear that the former has a much more natural correlation with the beautiful:

Beauty and goodness in a thing are identical fundamentally; for they are based upon the same thing, namely, the form; and consequently goodness is praised as beauty. But they differ logically, for goodness properly relates to the appetite (goodness being what all things desire); and therefore it has the aspect of an end (the appetite being a kind of movement towards a thing). On the other hand, beauty relates to the cognitive faculty; for beautiful things are those which please when seen. Hence beauty consists in due proportion; for the senses delight in things duly proportioned, as in what is after their own kind—because even sense is a sort of reason, just as is every cognitive faculty. Now since knowledge is by assimilation, and similarity relates to form, beauty properly belongs to the nature of a formal cause.<sup>110</sup>

The beautiful and the good refer to the same thing, namely, a given form. Considered as good, this form is an end toward which the appetitive movement of desire tends in the order of final causality, for the good is *what all desire*. Considered as beautiful, this form relates to the cognitive powers, and since knowledge is by *assimilation*, and *similitude* relates to form, this relation falls within the order of formal causality. Yet, the beautiful is not simply a relation of some form to the cognitive powers, as we find in the order of true and the knowability of being, for the beautiful is that which *pleases* when seen. In other words, the experience of a beautiful form involves an appetitive moment of pleasure, which, as we demonstrated in chapter five, is proper to the

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<sup>110</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1.

appetite and not the cognitive powers. Therefore, Aquinas argues that the beautiful consists in due proportion (which is synonymous with 'harmony', *consonantia*), for sense, and reason, and every kind of cognitive power, delights in things duly proportioned, as in that which is a similar thing to itself (*sicut in sibi similibus*), for every cognitive faculty is a kind of *ratio* or *proportio*.<sup>111</sup>

Accordingly, like love, the beautiful is not enclosed within the appetitive order of desire and final causality, but rather, it has an intrinsic connection with the preceding cognitive order of knowledge and formal causality. Furthermore, like love, the experience of the beautiful is not simply contingent upon a cognitive apprehension of some form, but consists in the simultaneity of this apprehension and its termination in the appetite and a certain experience of pleasure – it is simultaneously cognitive and appetitive, for we call those things beautiful which please *when* seen – a pleasure which arises not because of the acquisition of the form *in rebus*, but because of the mere apprehension of that form *in mente*. In other words, in contrast to the movement of desire in the order of the good, which is an outward movement of the soul toward being in the order of final causality, the experience of beauty corresponds to the movement of love, which is a preceding, inward movement of being toward the soul. This is a moment of assimilation, which is dependent upon, but not simply reducible to the reception of intelligible form in the intellect, as in the order of the true, for it is the formation of the appetite by the apprehension of the appetible object, so that the former takes complacency in the latter.<sup>112</sup> As such, it is a movement in the order of

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<sup>111</sup> See the discussion of this text in chapter five. Given our conclusion in chapter six, namely, that *harmony* or *proportion* is the unique addition to being to which the beautiful relates, it is significant that in this very important passage Aquinas defines the *ratio* of the beautiful solely in terms of *due proportion*.

<sup>112</sup> *De Verit.*, q, 26, a. 4: 'amoris, qui nihil est aliud quam formatio quaedam appetitus ab ipso appetibili'. Cf. 'Love is a *reception* that occurs, not in the intellect per se, but in the appetite, and beauty is the experience in which the appetite comes to rest, not in the actual enjoyment of the thing in itself, but rather in the reception of a thing's outward form. Love and beauty therefore perfectly coincide... the apprehension that triggers the movement of desire, so to speak, is *just what love is*, namely, a reception in the appetite, which disposes it positively toward a given object. And insofar as this being disposed is a movement that comes to rest *in* the appetite, this occurrence can only be described as a

formal causality, which terminates not in the intellect *per se*, but in the appetite *through* the intellect.

Indeed, this connection between love and the beautiful is particularly evident from Aquinas's discussion concerning the causes of love. As we saw in chapter five, he argues that the appetitive power is a passive power, so its object is the cause of its movement or act, therefore, since love belongs to the appetitive power, its proper object is its cause, which, Aquinas argues, is the good, since love implies a certain connaturality or complacency of the lover towards the beloved, and that which is connatural and proportionate to each is the good.<sup>113</sup> Of course, this conclusion begs the question as to whether the appetite is only related to that which is connatural and proportionate to it by a relation of desire. As we have seen from our analysis in this chapter, Aquinas's characterisation of love is in tension with this idea, not least because the complacency of love precedes the movement of desire, and it is a movement in the opposite direction of desire, namely, from the object to the subject. Nevertheless, Aquinas argues in the *sed contra* of the article just mentioned that the good alone is the cause of love.<sup>114</sup>

However, as we have already seen, in his reply to the third objection Aquinas, in fact, does argue that there is a diversity in terms of the appetite's relations.<sup>115</sup> The good is that which all desire, and so it belongs to the *ratio* of the good that it is that *in which* the appetite is calmed and brought to rest in the experience of pleasure *simpliciter*, whereas it belongs to the *ratio* of the beautiful that it is that of which *the sight or knowledge of it* calms the appetite and brings it to rest in the experience of pleasure *secundum quid*, so that we call beautiful that of which the very apprehension is pleasing. In other words, there is a termination of the appetite – its coming to rest in a moment of actuality – in both the order of the good and the order of the beautiful.

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delight that occurs in the mere apprehension of an object, independently of a direct enjoyment of it, or to put it in less technical terms, as an experience of beauty.' Schindler, 'Love and Beauty,' 343-44.

<sup>113</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1.

<sup>114</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 s.c.: 'Solum igitur bonum est causa amoris.'

<sup>115</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1 ad 3.

In the order of the good, this is a termination of the outward movement of desire, whereby the appetite comes to rest *in* the appetible object itself, and the experience of pleasure in possessing that object. By contrast, in the order of the beautiful, this is a termination *in the appetite*, which comes to rest as the beautiful object brings pleasure to the appetite as a result of that object being apprehended. As such, the good is properly co-ordinated to our experience of desire, whereas the beautiful is properly co-ordinated to our experience of love. Indeed, Aquinas indicates this very conclusion in the next article, as he explains the manner in which knowledge is a cause of love:

good is the cause of love, as being its object. But good is not the object of the appetite, except as apprehended. And therefore love demands some apprehension of the good that is loved. For this reason the Philosopher (*Ethic.* ix, 5, 12) says that bodily sight is the beginning [*principium*] of sensitive love: and in like manner the contemplation of spiritual beauty or goodness is the beginning [*principium*] of spiritual love. Accordingly knowledge is the cause of love for the same reason as good is, which can be loved only if known.<sup>116</sup>

It is striking that bodily sight is identified in this passage as the *principium* of sensitive love, for this is one of the two senses that Aquinas identified with the experience of the beautiful in the previous article, and he explicitly states that the contemplation of spiritual *beauty* and goodness is the *principium* of spiritual love.

That in which the contemplation of this beauty consists, which is the principle of love, is clarified further in the next article, as Aquinas discusses how ‘likeness’ (*similitudo*) is a cause of love.<sup>117</sup> Now, he argues, the likeness between things can be considered in two ways. On the one hand, both may have the same thing *in act*, as two things having the same form, whether a substantial or accidental form, are said to be similar. In other words, this likeness arises from some actual *unity* in form. On the other hand, one thing may have *in potentiality* what the other has in act, such that the former has a certain inclination for that which is possessed by the latter, for

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<sup>116</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 2. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX, 5.3: ‘the pleasure of the eye is the beginning of love. No one falls in love without first being charmed by beauty.’ Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vol. 19, translated by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934).

<sup>117</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 3.

potentiality has a likeness to the act itself, and in a certain manner, an act is in the potentiality itself. In other words, this likeness arises from some potential *unity* in form. The first kind of likeness causes the 'love of friendship', or the 'love of benevolence', for from the fact that two things are actually *one* in form, the affection of the one tends towards the other as if towards itself, and the one wishes good for the other as for itself. The second kind of likeness causes the 'love of concupiscence', or friendship of the 'useful' or the 'pleasant', since in everything existing in potentiality there is the desire for its act, and (in those things which are sentient and cognizant) there is pleasure in its actualisation.

The division between the love of friendship and the love of concupiscence is of fundamental importance, especially in terms of its correlation with the difference between the beautiful and the good, and we will return to this theme in just a moment, when we consider the notion of *union* in Aquinas's characterisation of love. However, for now we will focus simply upon the love of friendship or benevolence, which arises from the likeness between two things in terms of their being *actually one in form*, as in the case of two people who are one in the substantial form of 'humanity', or one in the accidental form of being 'white' or 'black', for instance. As Aquinas states, this unity of likeness is a cause of love insofar as it causes the affection of the one to tend toward the other as if toward itself, which is the context within which the one wills the good of the other. In other words, the lover's perception of the beloved's likeness and unity in form with themselves is the cause of their love.

Although this kind of friendship belongs properly to human relations,<sup>118</sup> there is a sense that it can be analogically extended beyond this context. First, Aquinas argues that we can love in another what we do not love in ourselves in terms of a *ratio* of likeness (*similitudo*) according to some proportionality (*proportionalitatem*), for there is a proportion between, on the one hand, what the other is to that which is loved in them, and on the other hand, what we are to that which is loved in us: for instance, if

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<sup>118</sup> For instance, *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 4 s.c.

a good singer loves a good writer, there is a ‘similarity of proportion’ (*similitudo proportionis*), according as each has what is agreeable to them according to their art.<sup>119</sup> In other words, love of friendship is analogous. Secondly, there is a sense in which this extends not just to different kinds of *human* proportions, but to all kinds of proportion. For example, whereas the diversity of beings differ in terms of their special forms, they all agree insofar as they are beings, and especially in terms of the fundamental proportion in every creature between their essence and their existence, which is signified by the Augustinian note of *mode* or *measure*. Therefore, as Aquinas argues, being *qua* being does not have the *ratio* of being repugnant, but rather of being ‘agreeable’ (*convenientia*), because all things agree in being,<sup>120</sup> and so being cannot be universally hated (the opposite of love), because ‘disharmony’ is the cause of hatred, whereas ‘agreement’ is the cause of love, and being is common to all.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, he states that love is a certain ‘consonance’ of the appetite to that which is apprehended as *like* or agreeable, while hatred is a certain ‘dissonance’ of the appetite to that which is apprehended as repugnant and harmful.<sup>122</sup> In other words, there is a fundamental proportion and harmony of all things insofar as they are beings, so that, just as we argued in chapter five, as the category of the honourable can be analogically extended to the intrinsic excellence in being of all things, likewise, there is an analogical sense in which the human soul can enter into an ‘ontological friendship’ with all beings, insofar as the ‘primordial proportion’ between essence and existence is *similar* in all creatures. In other words, that which is loved in a tree, that is, its colour and shape, is loved in an analogously proportional way to that which is loved in a person, that is, their virtue and spiritual beauty. In both cases, the fitting augmentation of a substance

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<sup>119</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 3 ad 2.

<sup>120</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 29, a. 1: ‘ens, in quantum ens, non habet rationem repugnantis, sed magis convenientis, quia omnia conveniunt in ente.’

<sup>121</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 29, a. 5: ‘Ens autem et verum in universali quidem odio haberi non possunt, quia dissonantia est causa odii, et convenientia causa amoris; ens autem et verum sunt communia omnibus.’

<sup>122</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 29, a. 1: ‘Sic igitur et in appetitu animali, seu in intellectivo, amor est consonantia quaedam appetitus ad id quod apprehenditur ut conveniens, odium vero est dissonantia quaedam appetitus ad id quod apprehenditur ut repugnans et nocivum.’

by its accidental being is analogously similar, so that we can speak of a *similitudo proportionis* between all beings in this respect.

Crucially, we recall that Aquinas argues that the beautiful consists in due proportion, for sense and intellect are a kind of *ratio* or *proportio*, and so these cognitive powers delight in that which is duly proportioned, as in *similar* things (*similibus*) to themselves.<sup>123</sup> In other words, what the beautiful ‘adds’ to being is a relation of ‘agreement’ with the intrinsic proportion and harmony of a being, which is love-worthy because of the beloved’s *similarity* to the lover.<sup>124</sup> The ‘agreement’ of being with the soul expressed by the beautiful is a relation of *love*.<sup>125</sup> This relation finds its paradigm in the ‘love of friendship’ between human persons – and ultimately in the friendship that we have with God, which is a participation in the divine life itself – but it can be analogically extended in such a way that it embraces the relation between the human soul and every being. Finally, we can observe that Aquinas’s characterisation of the place of union in the experience of love further clarifies that in which this experience of the beautiful consists, especially in contradistinction to the experience of the good in desire.

We recall, Aquinas argues that love is divided into the ‘love of friendship’ (*amore amicitiae*) and the ‘love of concupiscence’ (*amore concupiscentiae*).<sup>126</sup> Following Aristotle, he observes that to love is *to will the good of another*, which means that love has a twofold tendency: first, towards *the good* that is willed (either to oneself, or to

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<sup>123</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1.

<sup>124</sup> In other words, the beauty which is the cause of our love is a certain proportion of being that is fitting to the beloved. If we think about it, this makes sense of why we love to decorate our homes and other environments in which we spend time so that they are beautiful, because the experience of the beautiful is an experience of *being at home in the world* – that is, the proportionality and beauty that we see in others resonates with the inner proportionality of our own being, so that to see it in another is to be reminded of it in ourselves. The beautiful calls to us in such a way that it is an experience of homecoming.

<sup>125</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 29, a. 2: ‘amor consistit in quadam *convenientia* amantis ad amatum’. Cf *De Verit.* q. 1, a. 1: ‘Alio modo secundum *convenientiam* unius entis ad aliud; et hoc quidem non potest esse nisi accipiatur aliquid quod natum sit convenire cum omni ente: hoc autem est anima, quae quodammodo est omnia, ut dicitur in III de anima.’

<sup>126</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 26, a. 4.

another), which is love of concupiscence; and secondly, towards *the one to whom* the good is willed, which is love of friendship.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, these two kinds of love are related to one another as the prior and the posterior, for what is loved with the love of friendship is loved *simpliciter* and *per se*, whereas what is loved with the love of concupiscence is not, but is loved for the sake of another. Just as that which is 'being' *simpliciter* is that which has existence (*esse*), and that which is 'being' *secundum quid* is that which has existence in another, so it is with the good, which is convertible with being. Thus, that which itself has goodness is 'good' *simpliciter*, whereas that which is the good of another is 'good' *secundum quid*. Therefore, Aquinas concludes, 'the love with which a thing is loved, that it may have some good, is love simply; while the love, with which a thing is loved, that it may be another's good, is relative love'. In other words, the love of friendship is love *simpliciter*, whereas the love of concupiscence is love *secundum quid*.

Now, in his discussion of union as an effect of love, Aquinas argues that both the 'love of concupiscence' and the 'love of friendship' proceed from a certain *apprehension* of the union between the lover and the beloved.<sup>128</sup> When someone loves a thing according to the love of concupiscence, the lover apprehends the beloved as belonging to their own well-being. When someone loves another with the love of friendship, the lover wills good to the beloved, just as the lover wills good to themselves, and in this way the lover apprehends the beloved as their other self, so to speak, insofar as the lover wills good to the beloved as they do to themselves.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, Aquinas argues, the union of the lover and the beloved is twofold: either 'real' (*secundum rem*), when the beloved is present with the lover; or 'affective'

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<sup>127</sup> Strictly speaking, Aquinas differentiates between 'benevolence' (i.e., the act of the will by which we wish the good of another) and 'actual love'. The former is a simple act of the will, whereas the latter denotes a certain affective union between the lover and beloved. See *STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 2. As Schindler observes, if love were merely enclosed within the appetitive order of the good, this distinction would not make any sense. However, because love is essentially correlated with the beautiful, as the prior context from which all subsequent acts of the will proceed, as from their principle, then the distinction does make sense. See 'Love and Beauty,' 345-47.

<sup>128</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 28, a. 1.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. *ScG* I, 91 (4).

(*secundum affectum*), which must be considered from the preceding apprehension. On the one hand, 'real union' is caused 'effectively' by love, because love moves the lover to desire and to seek the presence of the beloved, as if it were something agreeable that pertains to the lover, and on the other hand, 'affective union' is caused 'formally' by love, because 'love itself is this union or bond'.<sup>130</sup> As Aquinas puts it in the reply to the second objection in this article, 'affective union', which is according to the 'co-adaptation' of affection, is essentially love itself, which is likened to the substantial union of the lover with themselves, insofar as the lover stands to the beloved as to themselves, in the case of 'love of friendship', or, as to something belonging to themselves, in the case of 'love of concupiscence'.<sup>131</sup> Thus, the 'affective union' of lover

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<sup>130</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 28, a. 1. This might seem to contradict what Aquinas had said two articles earlier in his discussion about whether love is a passion, where he states that 'love is not the very relation of union, but that union is a result of love.' (See *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 2, ad 2). However, it is important to see that what Aquinas is rejecting in that instance is the idea that love is a relation in a *categorical* sense. Therefore, he argues, union does pertain to love itself, insofar as by the complacency of the appetite the lover stands in relation to the beloved as if to themselves, or as if to something of themselves. In other words, union belongs to the very nature of love in this 'affective' mode. Nevertheless, love is not the very *relation* of union, which, in turn, is the result of love, namely 'real' union. As we have just seen, affective union is *formally* what love is, whereas real union is *effectively* the result of love. In other words, 'affective union', which is formally what love is, is a *conceptual* relation between the lover and the beloved, similar to that which Aquinas describes in *De veritate* 21.1, when outlining the way in which the true and the good 'add' to being. This is an asymmetric relation, where the subject (the lover) is related to the object (the beloved), but not vice versa. By contrast, 'real union', which is the result of love, is a *real* relation in the sense that it is a categorical mode of being, that adds something to the being of the two who are related. As Aquinas explains, it involves the actual conjunction of the two.

This is an important distinction to make if we seek to correlate love with transcendental beauty, since the formal union of lover and beloved, which is what love is, cannot be a real union, that is, it cannot fall under the *category* of relation, for this would destroy the transcendental of the beautiful. In this case, the love-worthiness of the beloved would only be a reality contingent upon them actually being loved by a human subject, rather than simply being an inherent reality of the being that the beloved receives from God. In this respect, our argument differs from that of Schindler, who argues that the proper place of love as a union is *between* lover and beloved. See *Love and the Postmodern Predicament*, 102-104. His argument here depends to a large extent upon a theory of beauty as an encounter between 'two freedoms', which he defines in terms of the *appearance* of being (*ibid*, 31-48, 105-06). However, Schindler acknowledges that elements of his argument might appear to involve certain 'anti-Thomistic' claims, especially in his placing of beauty before goodness and truth in the order of the transcendentals. It lies beyond the scope of the present study to fully engage with these arguments.

<sup>131</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 28, a. 1, ad 2: 'Quaedam vero unio est essentialiter ipse amor. Et haec est unio secundum coaptationem affectus. Quae quidem assimilatur unioni substantiali, in quantum amans se habet ad amatum, in amore quidem amicitiae, ut ad seipsum; in amore autem concupiscentiae, ut ad aliquid sui.'

and beloved, which union is the very form and bond of love itself, can apply to the love of friendship and of concupiscence. However, bearing in mind what we just said, this applies to love of friendship *simpliciter*, and to love of concupiscence *secundum quid*. In other words, the paradigm of love is *the affective union of the lover with the beloved in the love of friendship*.

Accordingly, the difference between ‘affective’ and ‘real’ union corresponds to the difference between the orders of the beautiful and the good. On the one hand, the good brings the appetitive movement of desire to rest in the pleasure of possessing the end sought, in the ‘real union’ of lover and beloved: ‘There is real union, consisting in the conjunction of one with the other. This union belongs to joy or pleasure, which follows desire.’<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, the experience of the beautiful terminates in the appetite, bringing it to rest in the moment that the apprehended appetible object brings about a complacency in the appetite toward itself, that is, *before* the appetite’s movement of desire in the order of final causality. It is almost as if the will, in conjunction with the intellect, stops or rests *before* the appetible object simply to behold it with pleasure. This is what we would call *aesthetic* pleasure, as opposed to *appetible* pleasure (i.e., the pleasure brought about by the ‘good’), because the subject delights *in* the object as an end in itself, as something beautiful and love-worthy, regardless of what that object can do *for* the subject. As Aquinas argues in *De veritate* 22.1 ad 12:

By the very fact of tending to good a thing at the same time tends to the beautiful [...] It tends to the beautiful inasmuch as it is modified and specified in itself. These notes are included in the essential character of good, *but good adds a relationship of what is perfective in regard to other things*.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2 ad 2. Note, *desire* is the proper relation of the soul to being according to the order of the good, and so the ‘real union’ of subject and object is a result of this relation. This is important because it preserves the good as expressing a conceptual relation (i.e., the intrinsic desirability of being), and does not make it a categorial predicate, that is, that something is only good insofar as it is actually *really related* to a subject possessing it, which would destroy the transcendental character of the good.

<sup>133</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1 ad 12. Translation modified. My emphasis.

In other words, the relation to the beautiful comes before the relation to the good, insofar as the latter adds to the former the notion of a being having a perfective relation to the soul. The beautiful has the *ratio* of being non-perfective, or *supra*-perfective, that is, it is a relation to reality above the mere consideration of how another being can be perfective, and is instead a relation where the soul takes pleasure in another *qua* other. As such, the union that the soul seeks in the order of the beautiful is 'affective', which Aquinas characterises in the following way:

There is also an affective union, consisting in an aptitude or proportion, in so far as one thing, from the very fact of its having an aptitude for and an inclination to another, partakes of it: and love betokens such a union. This union precedes the movement of desire.<sup>134</sup>

Love is a *partaking* of being, as opposed to a *taking* of being, it is a disposition of the soul which regards the good universally, whether possessed or not, in contrast to desire and pleasure, which regard the good as something to be possessed.<sup>135</sup> This loving complacency above the level of mere possession correlates perfectly with the *ratio* of the beautiful. The 'affective union' of the lover and the beloved in the experience of the beautiful does not close the difference between the two, as in the case of 'real union', which is what the order of the good aims at, rather, it is a pleasure in the other *as other*. Accordingly, if the addition to being that the beautiful makes is a relation to the *harmony* and *unity* of being, now we see that 'affective union', in which the experience of the love of beauty consists, is itself an instance of harmonious unity, a bond of affection, in contrast to 'real union', where the two terms of the relation are united whilst being preserved in their difference.<sup>136</sup>

We can develop our analysis one step further by making a connection between this conception of love – that is, the paradigm of the affective union at the heart of the

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<sup>134</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 25, a. 2 ad 2.

<sup>135</sup> *STh* I, q. 20, a. 1.

<sup>136</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 29, a. 1: 'amor est consonantia quaedam appetitus ad id quod apprehenditur ut conveniens'. Cf. *In De div. nom.* IV, lect. 5 (349): 'quod propter pulchrum divinum sunt omnium rationalium creaturarum concordiae, quantum ad intellectum; concordant enim qui in eandem sententiam conveniunt; et amicitiae, quantum ad affectum'.

love of friendship – and the notion of the honourable. In his discussion of the division between love of friendship and love of concupiscence, Aquinas makes a very significant observation in the reply to third objection.<sup>137</sup> In a friendship that is ‘useful’ or ‘pleasant’, he argues, the nature of friendship is preserved insofar as the lover does indeed will some good for their beloved friend. However, because the good of the friend is ultimately referred to the lover’s own *usefulness* or *pleasure*, since the friendship itself serves their use or pleasure, the lover falls short of the true nature of friendship, and they are drawn instead into the love of concupiscence. In other words, true love of friendship is not self-serving. The lover simply has a complacency in the friend and wills their good. This is not quite the same as Nygren’s conception of altruistic love, because, strictly speaking, it is not *disinterested* or *dispassionate*. Rather, the lover takes pleasure in the other to whom they will the good, for this love is a *complacentia*, a taking pleasure *with* and in another as other. The comparison of this friendship based upon love, in comparison to friendship based upon *use* or *pleasure* evokes Aquinas’s division of the good into the useful, the pleasant, and the honourable, which we examined in chapter five.<sup>138</sup> In other words, the love of friendship seems to correspond very closely to the *bonum honestum*, namely, the honourable.<sup>139</sup> In this sense, we can characterise love, as the soul’s response to beauty, as a willing of another’s intrinsic excellence and love-worthiness. This would be a delight in the good of another; as Josef Pieper has put it, an affirmation of the lover for the beloved, ‘It’s good that you exist; it’s good that you are in this world!’<sup>140</sup> In other words, all experiences of the beautiful involve a love that is implicitly a giving of honour to the intrinsic excellence of another.

This ability to honour and love the good of another, to celebrate its mere existence, without having to appropriate it for ourselves, is only possible upon the

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<sup>137</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 26, a. 4, ad 3.

<sup>138</sup> *STh* I, q. 5, a. 6.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 25, a. 1 ad 2: ‘amor respicit bonum in communi, sed honor respicit proprium bonum honorati, defertur enim alicui in testimonium propriae virtutis.’

<sup>140</sup> Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, 164.

basis of the 'three-dimensional liberty' that is proper to the rational appetite. As we argued in the first section of this chapter, a space opens up at this level of appetite between the apprehension of an appetible object, and the subsequent inclination toward that object, so that the will does not incline of necessity, as the sensitive appetite does. In other words, there is a space of detachment, in which the apprehended appetible object is not automatically rendered a thing of desire, but can be delighted in simply as an object of love. This is not a disinterested relation, but a profoundly involved one of deep ontological friendship, by which we celebrate the existence of the good of another. The correlation of love with the beautiful matters, because without this connection, the moment of love, as an ontological perfection in its own right, will always be at risk of being subsumed within the appetitive order of desire for the good. In other words, without its correlation to transcendental beauty, love will always be in danger of reduction to the first step in the appetite's progress toward the acquisition of the object that will give it satisfaction and pleasure. However, when love is essentially connected with beauty, it is elevated to the status of being a distinct revelation of being.

Likewise, this connection also illuminates the *ratio* of the beautiful, and the unique relation of the soul in which consists its unique addition to being. Indeed, our analysis has shown that love is the soul's relation to the beauty of being, an anthropological moment that is poised between the intellectual reception of form in the intellect, and the appetitive movement of desire toward that form. It is a relation of being *to* the appetite *through* the intellect, insofar as the form of the apprehended appetible object is presented by the intellect to the will, such that an inclination, proportion, and complacency is established in the latter. In this respect, our analysis of love confirms our argument that the distinct place of the beautiful in the cumulative and systematic order of the transcendentals is after the true, and before the good, at the *heart* of the soul's relation to being. Love reveals the *centrality of beauty*.

## CONCLUSION

Because the transcendentals are *general* 'modes of being' consequent upon every being simply by virtue of its very existence, reflection on the nature and number of the transcendentals is a fundamental aspect of Christian metaphysics and the unfolding of Christian dogmatics. Therefore, by way of conclusion, I will summarise the major findings of this study, and suggest two ways in which my conclusions might be developed in a theological direction.

In chapter one, we saw that, in contrast to the *special* or *categorial* 'modes of being', which contract and limit being to a finite and mutually exclusive kind or grade of being, the transcendentals are (1) 'identical', (2) 'convertible', and (3) 'co-extensive' with being, and with one another. In other words, taking the example of the 'good', for instance, we can say that (1) the good refers to the same thing as being, (2) every being is good, and every good is being, and (3) being and the good run through all of the categories and extend to every single kind of being. Consequently, (4) being and the transcendentals only differ 'rationally' or 'conceptually', so that (5) being is 'non-reciprocally presupposed' to all of the transcendentals as an original conceptual fullness from which they unfold as from their principle, and (6) each transcendental is distinct as a unique conceptual 'addition' in a systematic and cumulative order of proximity to being and one another. In chapter two, we analysed Aquinas's most comprehensive treatment of this subject, where he derives five transcendentals, namely, 'thing' (*res*), 'one' (*unum*), 'something' (*aliquid*), 'true' (*verum*), and 'good' (*bonum*).

Moreover, in chapter three, we employed the fundamentally important framework of the opposition between the 'one' and the 'many', to begin clarifying the systematic meaning and order of these transcendentals in Aquinas's thought. First is *res*, which signifies '*that which is*', the determinate and specific *identity* of a being, by

which it is divided from what it is not. Secondly is *unum*, which signifies ‘that which is intrinsically undivided’, the formal integrity and wholeness of being with itself. Thirdly is *aliquid*, which signifies ‘that which is extrinsically diverse’, the membership of any particular being in a multitude of other beings, all of which are one and undivided in themselves, but distinct from, and ordered to, one another. Likewise, in chapter four, we employed another crucially significant framework, namely, the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order*, to draw these three transcendentals into a systematic unity with the relational transcendentals of *verum* and *bonum*. We demonstrated that *res*, which signifies the form or *species* of a thing, is the particular precondition for the true, which Aquinas defines as the ‘adequation’ or ‘conformity’ of thing and intellect. Likewise, that *aliquid*, which signifies the extrinsic relation or *order* between beings, is the particular precondition for the good, which Aquinas defines as an end toward which an appetitive subject tends in the movement of desire, whereby one being is perfective of another by its goodness.

We concluded our analysis in part one of this study by illustrating that the above frameworks reveal a particular lacuna within Aquinas’s thought, namely, the fact that there is an implicit place for the beautiful within the systematic and cumulative order of the transcendentals, as a relation of the soul to the intrinsic *unity*, *harmony*, and *proportionality* of a being, which is signified by the Augustinian note of *mode* or *measure*. Primarily, this refers to the commensuration of essence and existence, the ‘primordial proportion’ which is the fundamental condition of creaturehood, but it also refers to the augmented harmonies of a creature in terms of the super-addition of accidental modes of being to its substantial form. In part two of our study, we confirmed this initial analysis in a number of steps. In chapter five, we demonstrated that the beautiful is indeed a distinct transcendental, and that it is not reducible to a species of either the good or the true, or a mere function of their mutual inclusion of one another. In chapter six, we further confirmed this conclusion by correlating our analysis in part one with Aquinas’s preferred definition of the *ratio* of beauty in terms of ‘brightness’ (*claritas*) and ‘harmony’ (*consonantia*), arguing that these two notions

correspond with the Augustinian notes of *species* and *mode*, respectively, such that the beautiful 'adds' immediately to the true, and that this is the addition of *consonantia/mode* to *claritas/species*. This constitution of the beautiful by cumulative inclusion and addition to the true is what is presupposed to the good, which, in turn, adds to the beautiful the notion of a relation whereby a being is perfective of another. As such, the 'one' (*unum*) is a particular precondition of the beautiful, so that the beauty of being is its intrinsic existential harmony and proportionality, whereas the goodness of being is its extrinsic status of being perfective of another such that the good refers to a being's existential desirability.

Finally, in chapter seven, we completed our analysis by demonstrating that Aquinas's anthropology of love perfectly correlates to his conception of the beautiful. That is, love names the relation of the soul to the beauty of being. The experience of love consists in an apprehension of the intrinsic harmony and proportionality of a being, which is pleasing because of its likeness to the one perceiving it. As such, the human soul responds to the beautiful in the affective union of 'ontological friendship', which we characterised as an analogical relation that is potentially embracing of all finite beings. This is a relation of being *to* the appetite *through* the intellect, which confirms the place of the beautiful between the true and the good, insofar as that order is actualised in the operations of the soul. This relation is a celebratory affirmation, a giving of honour, whereby we attest to the intrinsic excellence and goodness of another, not in order that it might be our own, but simply that it might *be*. It is an experience of the *symphony of being*, a rejoicing in the harmonic otherness of created things as *other*, which itself is an instance of harmony, for it is a bond of affective union which preserves subject and object in their abiding difference, as opposed to the real union at which the good aims in terms of the acquisition and appropriation of the object by the subject. In other words, the human soul responds to the beauty of being with a certain *complacency* in the other, which is a taking pleasure *with* and *alongside* another. The beauty that is loved in that other is the 'primordial proportion' between their being and essence, and all of the augmented harmonies of accidents and

substance that flow from it. It is a complacency in the non-necessity of the other, but also the utter fittingness and delightfulness that they exist. In this sense, our response to beauty in love is a repetition of the gesture of creation, whereby God gives being to that which is nothing in itself.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we might say that our experience of the beautiful is a participation in the divine vision of creation, an apprehension of another which brings pleasure simply because that other exists.

In the introduction to this study, we emphasised the *anthropological* significance of the transcendentals in general, and of the beautiful in particular, precisely in respect of the point just made above. That is, transcendental beauty signifies for the human soul an indispensable mode of relating to all created things, without which we will never be able to truly inhabit the world, nor faithfully perceive the goodness in it that God offers to us. As we conclude our study, we can both confirm and develop this point in terms of the *theological* significance of the beautiful.

In his celebrated phrase, Aquinas states that *grace does not destroy nature but perfects it*,<sup>2</sup> and so, I conclude by offering two examples of the way in which transcendental beauty is a necessary aspect of nature that is perfected by grace. These examples will both confirm the central claims of this thesis, and also signpost the way in which its theological significance might be developed further. The first concerns the perfection of our *natural* love by the *supernatural* gift of grace in the theological virtue of 'charity'. The second concerns the connection that Aquinas makes between, on the one hand, the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order* and the transcendentals, and on the other hand, the *vestigium Trinitatis*, and the way in which this signposts the place of the beautiful in what we might call a 'Trinitarian metaphysics of creation', and its recapitulation in the economy of salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> In his analysis of the creation in the Book of Genesis, Aquinas argues that the words, 'God saw that it was good', signify the *complacentia* of God the artist, in that which he had made, that it might remain. See *STh* I, q. 74, a. 3 ad 3.

<sup>2</sup> *STh* I, q. 1, a. 8 ad 2.

## *Beauty, love, and charity*

The first point concerns the way in which the *natural* relations of the human soul in the orders of truth, beauty, and goodness, respectively, are perfected by *grace* in the gift of the theological virtues of faith, charity, and hope. In the introduction, we argued that without the transcendental order of the beautiful, there would be an essential anthropological element missing from our encounter with finite being in the world, such that we would only be able to *know* and *desire* the things around us, and would not be able to take delight in the simple fact that they exist. Likewise, I want to suggest that we cannot make sense of the fundamental relation of honour, adoration, worship, and love toward God without beauty. We only have space to develop this idea very briefly, so we will turn to a text that gets to the heart of the matter, where Aquinas makes a very important distinction between the theological virtues:

A virtue is said to be theological from having God for the object to which it adheres. Now one may adhere to a thing in two ways: first, for its own sake; secondly, because something else is attained thereby. Accordingly charity makes us adhere to God for His own sake, uniting our minds to God by the emotion [*affectum*] of love. On the other hand, hope and faith make man adhere to God as to a principle wherefrom certain things accrue to us. Now we derive from God both knowledge of truth and the attainment of perfect goodness. Accordingly faith makes us adhere to God, as the source whence we derive the knowledge of truth, since we believe that what God tells us is true: while hope makes us adhere to God, as the source whence we derive perfect goodness, i.e., in so far as, by hope, we trust to the Divine assistance for obtaining happiness.<sup>3</sup>

Faith and hope are the theological virtues by which we adhere to God insofar as he is, respectively, the truth and goodness that we ultimately seek for ourselves. These are perfectly appropriate ways of relating to God, who is the perfect fulfilment of the finite spirit's powers of intellect and will, as the ultimate transcendental object of Truth and Goodness Itself. Furthermore, it is only because finite spirit is ultimately co-ordinated to this transcendental horizon that it can perceive finite truth and finite goodness at all.

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<sup>3</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 17, a. 6.

However, the picture is incomplete if we stop here, for there is another way in which the finite spirit adheres to God, that is, not for its own sake, but for God's own sake. The virtue of charity makes us adhere to God in this way, and Aquinas describes it as uniting our *minds* to God by the *affection* of love. Accordingly, the virtue of charity is simultaneously *apprehensive* and *appetitive*, and so it is a relation to God, not as true or good, but as beautiful.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, during the course of his discussion of charity, Aquinas argues that, whereas the love by which we hope to enjoy God as our good is the 'love of concupiscence', by contrast, we more perfectly love God with the 'love of friendship', which is charity, 'because the Divine good is greater in itself, than our share of good in enjoying Him.' In other words, the divine goodness is not a function of our enjoyment, but exceeds us, and so it has an intrinsic love-worthiness for its own sake; that is, it is an object of beauty that must be loved simply because it *is*, and not because it can fulfil us. This dimension is essential, for God does not exist as a function of our own fulfilment, and in this sense, he deserves our worship.

Indeed, Aquinas links this notion of loving God with the idea of giving him the singular *honour* of worship ('latria').<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the beautiful is essential to our theological anthropology, because it relates to that aspect of our nature that is perfected by grace whereby we are enabled to love and worship God for his own sake, that is, insofar as he is beautiful, and not simply our good. Moreover, a metaphysics and theology of beauty must, therefore, be decisive for questions concerning the liturgy and worship of the Church. Such a perspective will insist that the beautiful adornment of the liturgy, and the sacred space in which it takes place, is not a mere

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<sup>4</sup> In addition, as the beautiful presupposes the true, and precedes the good, in the systematic order of the transcendentals, Aquinas argues that faith (which takes divine *truth* as its object) precedes hope (which takes divine *goodness* as its object), and that in the 'order of perfection' charity (which takes divine *beauty* as its object) precedes hope. In other words, the order *true-beautiful-good* corresponds with the order *faith-charity-hope*. See *STh* II-II, q. 17, aa. 7, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *STh* II-II, q. 25, a. 1 ad 2; q. 27, a. 1 ad 2. Cf. Psalm xcvi. 6-9 (KJV): 'Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.'

fancy, not simply a preference for a certain 'style of worship' (a terrible phrase!), but an essential aspect in our offering to God. Such beauty is not an extravagance, nor mere ornamentation, because, like Mary's anointing of Christ at Bethany (John xii. 1-12), it is a display of the supreme love-worthiness of him whom we worship, and, at the same time, a manifestation of the beauty he bestows upon those whom he calls into his Mystical Body.

### *A Trinitarian metaphysics of beauty*

The second way in which the theological significance of transcendental beauty can be developed, in relation to the perfection of nature by grace, concerns Aquinas's use of the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order* in relation to the *vestigium Trinitatis*. This connection points to a 'Trinitarian metaphysics of creation', which is re-capitulated in the economy of salvation and the work of new creation. In respect of this, we can see that the beautiful is indispensable to the immanent identity of God, and the manifestation of his being in the work of creation and redemption.

During the course of his treatise on the creation in the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas asks whether to create is proper to any one of the divine persons.<sup>6</sup> To create, he argues, is to cause or produce the being (*esse*) of things, and since every agent produces that which is similar to itself, the principle of an action can be considered from the effect of that action. Therefore, to create belongs to God according to his being, which is identical with his essence, and is common to all three divine persons, and so, to create is common to the whole Trinity. Nevertheless, according to the character of their processions, the divine persons have a causality in respect of the creation of things, for God is the cause of things by his intellect and will, and so the Father creates things through his Word, which is the Son, and through his Love, which

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<sup>6</sup> *STh* I, q. 45, a. 6.

is the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Aquinas concludes, ‘the processions of the Persons are the type of the productions of creatures inasmuch as they include the essential attributes, knowledge and will.’<sup>8</sup> Indeed, whilst the divine nature is common to the whole Trinity, it belongs to the divine persons in a certain *order*, inasmuch as the Son receives it from the Father, and the Holy Spirit receives it from the Father and the Son.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the power of creation is in the Father as not received from another, the same power is in the Son, as received from another, so that he is the one *through* whom the Father creates, and the same power is in the Holy Spirit, as received from both, so that he is the one who governs and vivifies that which is created by the Father through the Son. Accordingly, the ‘essential attribute’ of *power* is appropriated to the Father, *wisdom* to the Son, and *goodness* to the Holy Spirit.

In the next article, Aquinas develops this point by arguing that there is a ‘trace of the Trinity’ (*vestigium Trinitatis*) in every creature, which manifests the causality of God, and this can be found according to the same manner of ‘appropriation’, insofar as the processions of the persons are the cause and type (*ratio*) of creatures.<sup>10</sup> As such, every creature (1) subsists in its own being (*esse*), (2) has a form whereby it is determined to a certain species, and (3) has a relation of order to something other than itself. First, according as a creature is a certain created substance it represents the cause and principle, and in this way it demonstrates the person of the Father, who is a principle from no principle. Secondly, according as it has a form and species, it represents the Word, according as the form of a work of art is from the conception of the artist. Thirdly, and finally, according as it has order it represents the Holy Spirit, insofar as he is love, because the order of the effect to something other is from the divine will. This, Aquinas argues, is why Augustine said that a trace of the Trinity is

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *STh* I, q. 14, a. 8; q. 19, a. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *STh* I, q. 45, a. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *STh* I, q. 45, a. 6 ad 2.

<sup>10</sup> *STh* I, q. 45, a. 7. See the replies to the first and third objections too.

found in every creature, namely, according as it is something that is *one*, according as it is formed by some *species*, and according as it has some relation of *order*.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, Aquinas argues that this trace is reducible to the three notes mentioned in Wisdom xi. 21, namely, *number*, *weight*, and *measure*, for 'measure' refers to the *substance* of a thing, limited by its principles, 'number' refers to its *species*, and 'weight' refers to its *order*. In other words, he argues, the trace is reducible to the Augustinian triad *mode-species-order*, for something is established by its substance, distinguished by its form, and agrees by its order. Therefore, according to the mode of 'appropriating' certain attributes to the divine persons of the Trinity, Aquinas argues that the Augustinian triad *mode-species-order* is ultimately reduced, respectively, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Likewise, he also argues in *De veritate* that every creature has a 'vestige' of the Trinity insofar as it is one, true, and good,<sup>12</sup> and that in God we 'appropriate' being to the essence, one to the Father, true to the Son, and good to the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

Now, our analysis has shown that the beautiful is an implicit transcendental in Aquinas's thought, and that it has a particular connection with the one, the latter being the presupposed basis in a being to which the human soul relates in the order of beauty.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, we can propose the following scheme as a consequence of our argument:

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, vi. 10.

<sup>12</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 4 s.c. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1 s.c. 5. Aquinas implicitly accepts this premise in his reply, even though he disagrees with the argument that was built upon it in the objection.

<sup>14</sup> This is a necessary development of Aquinas's thought, for *one* is a negation, whereas *true* and *good* are said of God affirmatively. Therefore, the *one* must be taken up into the positive register of the *beautiful* when appropriated to the Father, in order to harmonise with the appropriation of the affirmations *true* and *good* to the Son and the Holy Spirit.

| <b>The <i>vestigium Trinitatis</i> and the Trinitarian metaphysics of creation</b> |                |                    |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Son</b>     | <b>Holy Spirit</b> |
| <i>mode</i>  | <i>species</i> | <i>order</i>       |
| <i>beautiful</i>   | <i>true</i>    | <i>good</i>        |

Beauty should be appropriated to the Father, because he is the *one* who possesses the divine nature as always already given away in the Son.<sup>15</sup> In other words, he is the *measure of unity* in the Godhead, so that the being of God is always one of loving friendship, where the letting be of the other as other is primordial, and never subsequent. That is, the Father is the one in whom the fundamental identity of God is grounded as an abiding unity-in-difference. This would mean that the place of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead is subtly different, as a consummative *union* in the order of the good. If the Father is the one who represents the fact that divine unity is a rejoicing in, and love of, the other as different, the Holy Spirit is the one who represents the fact that divine difference is always held within a unity of desire and pleasure *in* one another. Furthermore, the Augustinian triad *species-mode-order* delineates the irreducibly threefold structure of all finite being, and the fact that Aquinas argues that this threefold structure is that in which the *vestigium Trinitatis* consists means that we can propose a ‘Trinitarian metaphysics of creation’, whereby the truth, beauty, and goodness of every being is an analogical participation in the life of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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<sup>15</sup> Of course, following tradition, Aquinas appropriate beauty to the Son, but in what follows we will argue that it is more fittingly appropriated to the Father.

Now, one obvious point in need of reconciliation is the order in which the Augustinian triad corresponds to the divine persons of the Trinity – (1) *mode*: Father (2) *species*: Son, and (3) *order*: Holy Spirit – in contrast to the way in which it corresponds to the systematic order of the transcendentals – (1) *species*: thing/true, (2) *mode*: one/beautiful, and (3) *order*: something/good. In other words, in the systematic order of the transcendentals, why does truth, which is signified by *species*, and appropriated to the Son, come before beauty, which is signified by *mode*, and appropriated to the Father?

To state the answer simply, the Trinitarian metaphysics of creation that we have very briefly sketched above, in terms of the *vestigium Trinitatis*, has a fundamentally *Christological orientation*, which is re-capitulated in the economy of salvation. We can begin to elucidate this point by observing that, for Aquinas, creation is analogously enfolded within the eternal procession of the Word from the Father.

For instance, in *De potentia* Aquinas argues that the eternal generation of the Son and the formation of creatures in time are analogously, as opposed to univocally, of one and the same *ratio*, since, as St Basil of Caesarea argued, the notion of ‘receiving’ is shared by the Son and all creatures, for which reason St Paul calls Christ the ‘firstborn of every creature’ (Colossians i. 15), and so, Aquinas concludes, the generation of the Son and the production of creatures can be placed under one common heading.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, Aquinas argues that God’s ‘generative’ and ‘creative’ powers are one, since the generation of the Son is the *ratio* of the production of creatures.<sup>17</sup> This is why *species*, *res*, and *verum* belong within the first division of the systematic order of the transcendentals, for they are appropriated to the Son, and all

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<sup>16</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 2, a. 5 ad 6. Cf. ‘There are hints in the writers of the patristic period, notably in Athanasius, that the eternal generation of the Word is indeed a sort of eternal type and ground of the bringing into being of a finite world; and the Word as the eternal form of dependence is likewise the ground and the optimal form of all dependent finite reality. Creation’s relation to God, in other words, is grounded in the Son’s relation to the Father. And since the Son’s relation to the Father is not of one thing to another thing...we are steered towards a similar model of the relation of between Creator and creature.’ Rowan Williams, *Christ the Heart of Creation* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), 221ff.

<sup>17</sup> *De Pot.*, q. 2, a. 6.

creation is brought forth as an analogical participation in the eternal generation of the Word. Therefore, *mode*, *unum*, and *pulchrum* follow in the second division of the systematic order of the transcendentals, for they are appropriated to the Father, as to the one whom we know as ‘presupposed’ to the Son.<sup>18</sup> As we saw in Aquinas’s discussion of St Hilary of Poitiers’s appropriation of *eternity*, *species*, and *use*, there is a connection between eternity, which is a ‘primal measure’ and a ‘principle without a principle’, and the notion of mode or measure. Indeed, both are appropriated to the Father, and upon the same basis. As such, mode or measure comes second in the order of the transcendentals, even though it is appropriated to the person of the Father, who is the font of the Godhead, since the production of creatures analogically participates in the eternal generation of the Son, and so the *mode* or *measure* of the Father is, for us, the presupposition of that *eternity*. We only know it upon the basis of that which presupposes it. We can further explain this with reference to the order of salvation history, which we can present in terms of Aquinas’s statement that, in God, four predicates are appropriated as follows: *being* to the divine essence, *one* (which we have interpreted in terms of *beauty*) to the Father, *true* to the Son, and *good* to the Holy Spirit.

In the first stage of salvation history, that is, in the history of ancient Israel, God reveals himself as *being*:

But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I am has sent me to you.”’<sup>19</sup>

The God of Israel acts graciously in the history of his chosen people, and reveals his holiness and mercy to them. Nevertheless, the immanent life of the Trinity is not disclosed, and so their knowledge of the divine essence is limited to that which can be known from natural reason: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou

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<sup>18</sup> Aquinas explains that *mode* signifies that which is ‘presupposed’ to *species*, namely, the determination of its material or efficient principles. See *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Exodus iii. 13, 14 (NRSV). Upon the basis of this text, Aquinas argues that the most proper name of God is ‘He Who Is’. See *STh* I, q. 13, a. 11.

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.<sup>20</sup> In this context, the knowledge of God's unity is merely apophatic, and functions as a negation of polytheism: God is one, not many, and so the pagan idols are merely the fabrications of the fallen human imagination.

The second stage of salvation history begins with the Incarnation: 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and *truth*.'<sup>21</sup> Christ comes into the world as Truth Incarnate:

Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'<sup>22</sup>

In the Gospels, it is the Word made flesh who is encountered as the concrete form of God, but as he repeatedly teaches, his teaching is not his own, for he is sent from the Father, and to see him is to see the Father. As such, the Father is known to us as mediated through the Son. Furthermore, just as the Father is beautiful insofar as he possesses the divine nature only as always already given away, so that the divine nature is, from all eternity, only ever possessed as given away in another, likewise, the gift of the Son to the world reveals the Father's beauty: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.'<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, the gift of salvation is a gift of love and beauty: the Father gives the Son so that we might not perish, but *be*. This is the way in which God loves the world: if creation falls under the same heading as generation, then new creation falls under the heading of incarnation.

In Christ's passion, death, and descent into hades, we see the extent of the Father's gift: 'He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us,

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<sup>20</sup> Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5 (KJV).

<sup>21</sup> John i. 14 (NRSV). My emphasis.

<sup>22</sup> John xviii. 37, 38. (NRSV).

<sup>23</sup> John iii. 16 (NRSV).

will he not with him also give us everything else?’<sup>24</sup> And in his resurrection, we see that the gift of the Father to the Son, and the Father’s gift of the Son, is greater than death and anything that human sin can fabricate against it. As Jesus rises from the grave, the new creation is brought to birth, the original harmony is re-established between God and humanity. For in his ascension into the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ returns to his Father as our great high priest, to offer himself as the most beautiful sacrificial gift that earth could ever offer to heaven, and in response to which the Holy Spirit is sent from heaven to earth, Christ’s work of salvation is one of giving us the ‘primordial proportion’ of the Father and the Son, as he weaves the whole fabric of creation back into the circle of divine love. He is the true form of reception, and so he perfectly reveals the Father, and displays the beauty of divine wisdom in the work of new creation. As such, the economy of salvation is simply beautiful in itself, for it is the revelation in history, in the context of human sin and fallenness, of God’s immanent life in eternity.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, the Holy Spirit is sent after Christ’s return to his Father in heaven, as the one by whom we take hold of the gift of salvation, and make it our own. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the gift of the *Good*, so that Christ, and all that he has done for us, may be *in* us, and we in him. Therefore, it is by our baptism into the Holy Spirit that we are *united* with Christ in the Mystical Body of the Church, just as it is by the Holy Spirit that we receive every gift of grace. But we are only given this gift of the divine good once we have seen the display of divine beauty. It is only when we have seen Christ, the Second Adam, live out a life of true reception in relation to the Father, that we are prepared for the good that God wants to give us. In other words, only when we have beheld divine beauty will we know what it means to receive our deification, not by reaching out and grabbing at the apple from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but by receiving the Spirit of him who stretched out his

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<sup>24</sup> Romans viii. 32 (NRSV).

<sup>25</sup> Herbert McCabe, *God Matters* (London: Continuum, 2005), 48-49.

hands upon the tree of the cross, so that it might become the Tree of Life; who prepared for us there, our true food and drink, which we now receive in the sacrament of his body and blood, as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. And so, as Dostoevsky put it in *The Idiot*, 'Beauty will save the world.' Indeed, in closing, it is fitting to turn to the literary imagination in order to glimpse something of this reality, and so I conclude by briefly visiting the way in which the deeply Christian vision of J.R.R. Tolkien sets forth this beauty which saves the world.

In his *Ainulindalë* ('The Music of the Ainur') Tolkien offers a grand creation myth, which narrates the origins of the cosmos within which the events of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* take place.<sup>26</sup> It begins with Eru, or Ilúvatar, the One, whose first creation is the Ainur, a kind of angelic class of beings who are the offspring of his thought, and to whom he teaches the themes of a music which is so glorious and splendid that they bow before him in reverential silence. Yet, Ilúvatar does not want the Ainur to be silent. Rather, he desires their harmonious participation in the 'Great Music', so that their powers may adorn the theme he has imparted to them, that a great beauty may be awakened into song. Thus, their polyphony brings forth an endless interchanging melody woven in harmony, which overflows and fills all places.

However, Melkor, one of the Ainur, pridefully conceives a music of his own imagining, which is not in accord with the theme of Ilúvatar, for his theme has the purpose only of increasing the power and glory of the part assigned to himself. As his discordant theme is woven into the cosmic song of the Ainur, the music of the whole falters, until it becomes a turbulent sound, as of a raging storm and dark waters at war with one another in an endless wrath. Nevertheless, Ilúvatar arises and issues forth a new and second theme with great power and beauty. The discord of Melkor rises up in opposition, so that the sound of violence and war was greater than it had been before. The Ainur are silenced and Melkor has the mastery. And yet:

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<sup>26</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, edited by Christopher Tolkien (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977), 15-17.

Ilúvatar arose, and the Ainur perceived that his countenance was stern; and he lifted up his right hand, and behold! a third theme grew amid the confusion, and it was unlike the others. For it seemed at first soft and sweet, a mere rippling of gentle sounds in delicate melodies; but it could not be quenched, and it took to itself power and profundity. And it seemed at last that there were two musics progressing at one time before the seat of Ilúvatar, and they were utterly at variance. The one was deep and wide and beautiful, but slow and blended with an immeasurable sorrow, from which its beauty chiefly came. The other had now achieved a unity of its own; but it was loud, and vain, and endlessly repeated; and it had little harmony, but rather a clamorous unison as of many trumpets braying upon a few notes. And it essayed to drown the other music by the violence of its voice, but it seemed that its most triumphant notes were taken by the other and woven into its own solemn pattern... Then Ilúvatar spoke, and he said: 'Mighty are the Ainur, and mightiest among them is Melkor; but that he may know, and all the Ainur, that I am Ilúvatar, those things that ye have sung, I will show them forth, that ye may see what ye have done. And thou, Melkor, shalt see that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite. For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined.'<sup>27</sup>

Tolkien's vision is one of creation as a glorious, splendorous, and harmonious music, in which the participation of creatures in the original divine theme awakens a great beauty into song. This is a vision in which the fall is characterised as an ancient pride, a discord brought about by a self-conceited individualism and monotony. In other words, the *ugliness* of sin consists in a monotonous unity which resists harmony and otherness. And yet, in the issuing forth of a second theme, we see the calling of Abraham and the ancient Hebrew people, from whom the Messiah is descended, which confronts the discordant departure from the original theme, leading ultimately to the war and violence of the cross. On our part, this is the ultimate departure from the original theme, but it is also the place where, amid the confusion, the delicate yet unquenchable melody of a third theme arises. The sorrowful beauty of this third theme is capacious enough to weave the endlessly repeating and clamorous monotony of the opposing melody, for there is no music that hath not its uttermost source in the divine beauty, for all the ugliness and pride of the dissenting melody is merely a privation of something much more wonderful and fundamental. In other words, Christ is the Father's gift of a third music, who restores the original harmony, and augments it with notes of beauty as yet unimagined. In no sense does he need the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 17.

privation of ugliness and evil in order to fashion this his great beauty, and yet, the gentle power of his music is a more fundamental depth, which is able to resolve the discords of our lives by the harmonies of his grace.<sup>28</sup> For he alone is the holy *one*, he alone is the Lord, he alone is the most high, Jesus Christ, *with* the Holy Spirit, in the glory *of* God the Father. Only after we have been raptured by the splendour and beauty of this new harmony will we be capable of taking up the great theme ourselves, and of finding a place within the polyphony of the new creation, and receive it as our ultimate good.

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<sup>28</sup> This phrase is taken from a prayer by Peter Baelz, a former Dean of Durham.

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