

# **Integrating Beauty: Reflections on the Psychology, Ontology, and Etiology of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* 1.5.4**

**Michael M. Waddell  
Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, IN)**

*In this essay, I reflect on the place of beauty in Thomas Aquinas's ontology, etiology, and psychology. I suggest that Thomas's discussion of beauty in Summa theologiae 1.5.4, read in light of other important texts from Aquinas's corpus, brings to the fore the integration of formal and final causality in his etiology, the integration of cognitive and appetitive faculties in his psychology, and the integration of truth and goodness in his ontology, as well as the more fundamental integration of ontology, etiology and psychology with one another in Thomas's broader teaching. I then explore the bolder claim that beauty might even effect the integration of these various aspects of Aquinas's thought and of reality as he construes it. Finally, I conclude by offering some suggestions for further reflection on the significance of beauty in Aquinas's philosophy and theology in light of the account I offer in the body of the paper.*

The significance of beauty in Thomas Aquinas's thought is a complicated matter. For the most part, scholars have tended to focus on the question of beauty's transcendental status.<sup>1</sup> On one hand, this is an important question because it pertains to the properties of being itself and therefore lies at the very heart of Thomas's metaphysics. On the other hand, Thomas himself did not seem to be very concerned with the question, and touched on it only obliquely in a few passages of his writings. What is more, the neo-Thomistic fascination with the question of whether beauty is a transcendental seems to have distracted scholars from other noteworthy aspects of Thomas's teaching on beauty.

In my opinion, one aspect of the significance of beauty in Aquinas's thought that has often been overlooked is its integrative character. Unfortunately, recent studies of Aquinas on beauty have tended to privilege one aspect of beauty over others and have thereby lost sight of the way in which Thomas's construal of beauty serves precisely to resist such fragmentation.<sup>2</sup> Consider, for example, two famous studies of Aquinas on beauty: Umberto Eco's *The Aesthetics*

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<sup>1</sup> A number of scholars have also attempted to construct a philosophy of art based, to varying degrees, on Aquinas's statements about beauty. In addition to some of the works cited in the notes below, see, for example, Leonard Callahan, *A Theory of Esthetic according to the Principles of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947); Francis Kovach, *Die Ästhetik des Thomas von Aquin* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1961); *idem*, *Philosophy of Beauty* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974); Marc de Munnynck, "L'esthétique de St. Thomas d'Aquin," in *San Tommaso d'Aquino* (Milan, 1923) ; and Maurice de Wulf, *Études Historiques sur l'esthétique de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain, 1896); *idem*, *L'oeuvre d'art et la beauté* (Louvain, 1920).

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that none of the studies I am about to mention goes so far as to reduce beauty completely to the one ontological or psychological principle it emphasizes. Scholars of this caliber are not likely to make such a simplistic error. I gesture toward these studies, however, as examples of a trend toward emphasizing one aspect of Thomas's teaching on beauty in such a way that the integrative character of this teaching is overlooked or, at least, not brought to the fore.

of Thomas Aquinas and Armand Maurer's *About Beauty*. In the former, Eco treats form as the critical ontological constituent of beauty.<sup>3</sup> In the latter, Maurer offers an existentialist reading of Aquinas on beauty in which *esse* is the chief constituent of beauty.<sup>4</sup> Thus, we see in these essentialist and existentialist renderings a tendency to separate correlative metaphysical principles (essence and existence) from one another. The same instinct seems to be evident in many discussions of beauty that try to locate it vis-à-vis truth and goodness. For example, G.B. Phelan attempts to make beauty a species of truth,<sup>5</sup> whereas Jacques Maritain attempts to make it a species of goodness.<sup>6</sup> And those who attempt such ontological maneuvers are also likely to construct psychologies wherein beauty is demarcated more or less exclusively as a relation between being and intellect or as a relation between being and appetite, respectively. What we have been left with, then, is a series of interpretations in which the significance of beauty is parsed largely in terms of a single aspect of Thomas's broader account. In my opinion, this tendency toward emphasizing a single aspect of beauty as its constitutive element has obscured an important function of beauty in Aquinas's thought, namely, the way in which Thomas's discussions of beauty serve precisely to highlight the integration of various aspects of Thomas's teaching, including the integration of formal causality with final causality, of truth with goodness, of intellect with appetite, and even of the very orders of etiology, ontology, and psychology with one another.

In what remains of this paper, I will reflect on *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4, a famous text that has intriguing implications for beauty's place within Thomas's broader ontology, etiology, and

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<sup>3</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Bredin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 66–71, 121; cf. p. 70, where Eco acknowledges the importance of existence (*esse*) in his metaphysics and aesthetics of form.

<sup>4</sup> Armand Maurer, *About Beauty: A Thomistic Interpretation* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1983), 4, 7, 12, 16; cf. pp. 8–10, where Maurer also notes the importance of form in limiting *esse* and therefore in constituting the beauty of created things.

<sup>5</sup> “We do not tend towards the beautiful as we tend toward the good, *i.e.*, in order to possess it. Rather, the perception of the beautiful puts us in possession of the thing in such a manner or mode that we can rejoice in that possession as we may rejoice in the acquisition of the good (*quietudo appetitus*), yet admire the thing in its physical reality disinterestedly, *i.e.*, without desiring, in order that our hunger for the beautiful be satisfied, to possess it in its individual, physical being, as we do in contemplating the true.” “Beauty in Nature,” p. 187, in *G.B. Phelan: Selected Papers*, ed. Kern (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1967): 181–87. Originally published in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 11 (1935): 175–79. See also “The Concept of Beauty in St. Thomas Aquinas,” pp. 168 and 175, in *G.B. Phelan: Selected Papers*, ed. Kern (Toronto: PIMS, 1967): 155–80. Originally published under the same title in *Aspects of the New Scholastic Philosophy*, ed. Hart (New York: Benziger, 1932): 121–45.

<sup>6</sup> Maritain writes: “Thus, although the beautiful borders on the metaphysical *true*, in the sense that every splendor of intelligibility in things implies some conformity with the Intelligence that is the cause of things, nevertheless the beautiful is not a kind of truth, but a kind of good; the perception of the beautiful relates to knowledge, but by way of addition, *comme à la jeunesse s'ajoute sa fleur*; it is not so much a kind of knowledge as a kind of delight.” *Art and Scholasticism*, in *Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry*, Trans. J. Evans (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 26. Originally published as *Art et Scolastique* (Paris: Art Catholique, 1920). Similar views seem to have been espoused, at least at one time or another, by both Umberto Eco and Jan Aertsen. See, for example, Eco's *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, 34; see also Aertsen's “Beauty in the Middle Ages: A Forgotten Transcendental?,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 1 (1991): 68–97, especially p. 91.

psychology.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, one of the most noteworthy features of this text is the way in which Thomas weaves together these three discourses to form a single, integrated doctrine. I will begin my reflections by teasing out ways in which Thomas's discussion of beauty in *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4, read in light of other important texts from Thomas's corpus, brings to the fore the integration of formal and final causality in his etiology, the integration of cognitive and appetitive faculties in his psychology, and the integration of truth and goodness in his ontology, as well as ways in which Thomas's doctrine of beauty might highlight the fundamental integration of ontology, etiology and psychology with one another in his broader teaching. When that modest task has been accomplished, I will venture to make the bolder claim that beauty itself might actually effect the integration of these various aspects of Thomas's thought. Finally, I will conclude by offering some suggestions for further reflection about the significance of beauty—as I have construed it—in Aquinas's teaching.

Thomas makes his most famous statements about beauty in the *Summa theologiae*. For example, in *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4, when treating the question “whether good has the aspect (*rationem*) of a final cause / *utrum bonum habeat rationem causae finalis*,” Thomas immediately confronts the following objection:

It seems that goodness has not the aspect of a final cause, but rather of the other causes. For, as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv), “Goodness is praised as beauty.” But beauty has the aspect of a formal cause. Therefore goodness has the aspect of a formal cause.<sup>8</sup>

The force of this objection coalesces from several different origins. To begin with, there is the authority of Dionysius, who appears to have connected the good with the beautiful. In the objector's mind, associating goodness with beauty implies that goodness operates through formal

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas discussed beauty in passing in a number of different texts. Three of these discussions are more substantial than the others and have appropriately come to form the textual bases of most Thomistic studies of beauty: *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4 ad 1, *Summa theologiae* 1.39.8, and *In divinis nominibus* IV, ll. 5–9 (especially lectiones 5, 6 and 8). It should be noted that none of these texts is an independent treatise on beauty in its own right. Thomas's *Commentary on the Divine Names* is shaped by the structure and demands of Ps. Dionysius's *Divine Names*. The *Summa theologiae* is an independent work, but question thirty-nine of the *prima pars* is primarily a defense of the appropriation of several essential properties of God to individual persons of the Trinity (St. Hilary appropriates “beauty” to the second person of the Trinity). This defense is influenced not only by its location in the “treatise on the Trinity,” but also by the fact that Thomas is trying to rescue theological authorities no less significant than Augustine and Hilary. Like *Summa theologiae* 1.39.8, the discussion of beauty in question five, article four of the *prima pars* has the advantage of being an independent text (that is, of not being informed by an authoritative text upon which Thomas is commenting). At the same time, beauty is only mentioned in *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4 ad 1 as an aside from a more central discussion of goodness; indeed, the discussion of beauty occurs in an objection and Thomas's reply to it. Nevertheless, this is the text in which we find Thomas's least qualified remarks about beauty, and Thomas renders his only definition of beauty there.

<sup>8</sup> *ST* 1.5.4 obj. 1: “Videtur, quod bonum non habeat rationem causae finalis, sed magis aliarum. Ut enim dicit Dionys. 4. De Div. nom.: *Bonum laudatur, ut pulchrum*: sed pulchrum importat rationem causae formalis; ergo bonum habet rationem causae formalis.” English translations of the *Summa theologiae* are taken from *Summa Theologica*, trans. English Dominicans (New York: Christian Classics, 1981), which I have emended from time to time. The Latin text for all quotations in this paper is taken from the Leonine Edition of Aquinas's works.

causality rather than final causality. Thus, the objection also belies a particular interpretation of Aristotle's types of causality, namely, one in which formal and final causality are kept quite separate. The second and third objections in this article use the authority of Dionysius and St. Augustine to try to prove that goodness operates through efficient causality rather than final causality.<sup>9</sup>

Thomas's determination of this question is less a stark rejection of the objectors' notions that goodness bears some relationship with both formal and efficient causality than it is an attempt to revise the objectors' fragmented understanding of how final, formal and efficient causality are interrelated:

I answer that, since goodness is that which all things desire, and this has the aspect of an end, it is clear that goodness implies the aspect of an end. Nevertheless, the idea (*ratio*) of goodness **presupposes the idea of an efficient cause, and also of a formal cause.** For we see that what is first in causing is last in the thing caused. For fire heats before it reproduces the form of fire, though the heat in the fire follows from its substantial form. Now, in causing, there is first found goodness and the end, which moves the efficient [cause]; second, the action of the efficient cause moving to the form; third, comes the form. Hence, in that which is caused, the converse ought to take place, so that there should be first the form itself whereby it is a being; second, it is considered in its effective power (*virtus effectiva*), according to which it is perfect in being, since a thing is perfect when it can produce its like, as the Philosopher says (*Meteor. iv*); third, there follows the formality (*ratio*) of goodness, through which perfection in being is founded.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See *ST* 1.5.4 obj. 2 and 3: "Obj. 2: Further, goodness is self-diffusive; for Dionysius says (*Div. Nom. iv*) that goodness is that whereby all things subsist and are. But to be self-giving implies the aspect of an efficient cause. Therefore goodness has the aspect of an efficient cause.

Obj. 3: Further, Augustine says (*De Doctr. Christ. 1.31*) that 'we exist because God is good.' But we owe our existence to God as the efficient cause. Therefore goodness implies the aspect of an efficient cause. / 2. Praeterea, bonum est diffusivum sui esse, ut ex verbis Dionysii accipitur, quibus dicit quod *bonum est ex quo omnia subsistunt et sunt*. Sed esse diffusivum importat rationem causae efficientis. Ergo bonum habet rationem causae efficientis.

3. Praeterea, dicit Augustinus in *I de Doctr. Christ.*, quod *quia Deus bonus est, nos sumus*. Sed ex Deo sumus sicut ex causa efficiente. Ergo bonum importat rationem causae efficientis."

<sup>10</sup> *ST* 1.5.4 co.: "Respondeo dicendum quod, cum bonum sit quod omnia appetunt, hoc autem habet rationem finis; manifestum est quod bonum rationem finis importat. **Sed tamen ratio boni praesupponit rationem causae efficientis, et rationem causae formalis.** Videmus enim quod id quod est primum in causando, ultimum est in causato, ignis enim primo calefacit quam formam ignis inducat, cum tamen calor in igne consequatur formam substantialem. In causando autem, primum invenitur bonum et finis, qui movet efficientem; secundo, actio efficientis, movens ad formam; tertio advenit forma. **Unde e converso esse oportet in causato, quod primum sit ipsa forma, per quam est ens; secundo consideratur in ea virtus effectiva, secundum quod est perfectum in esse (quia unumquodque tunc perfectum est, quando potest sibi simile facere, ut dicit philosophus in *IV Meteor.*); tertio consequitur ratio boni, per quam in ente perfectio fundatur.**" Emphasis mine.

We need not tarry with all of the details of this discussion. It suffices, for our purposes, to note that Thomas affirms that goodness bears the notion of final causality, but that this does not preclude goodness from also being related to efficient and formal causality because, in the one causing, final causality extends into efficient causality and ultimately into formal causality; moreover, in the thing caused, goodness (i.e., perfection of being) presupposes both agency (*virtus effectiva*) and form (which gives being). Thus, Thomas seems to envision here a deep integration—a sort of “nesting”—of final, efficient, and formal causes, with that integration resulting from the fact that all such causes are founded in being.<sup>11</sup>

When Thomas turns his attention to the first objection of *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4, then, he has prepared the way for preserving the Aristotelian link between goodness and final causality without breaking the Dionysian link between goodness and beauty or the objector’s link between beauty and formal causality:

To the first objection, it must be said that the beautiful and the good are the same in subject, for they are based upon the same thing, namely, upon form; and for this reason the good is praised as beautiful. But they differ in concept because goodness properly relates to the appetite, for the good is what all things desire; and therefore it has the aspect of an end, for appetite is a kind of movement towards a thing. On the other hand, beauty relates to the cognitive faculty because beautiful things are those that please when seen. Hence beauty consists in due proportion since sense delights in things duly proportioned just as in things similar to itself: for sense, and every cognitive faculty, is a kind of proportion (*ratio*). Now since cognition happens by assimilation, and similarity relates to form, the beautiful properly belongs to the nature (*rationem*) of a formal cause.<sup>12</sup>

Thomas, thus, affirms that goodness and beauty are indeed the same *in subiecto* because they are both founded on form. But Thomas also maintains that beauty and goodness are different in concept (*ratione*). Interestingly, he does not initially draw the distinction between beauty and goodness by reference to distinct orders of causality—namely, the formal and final causality so

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<sup>11</sup> Given the context of the article—viz., Thomas’s discussion of the (perfection and goodness of the) Divine Essence—the cause that primarily interests Thomas in *ST* 1.5.4 is not just the final cause but *the Final Cause* (God). Accordingly, it is not surprising that Thomas would want to show how formal, efficient and final causality are united, for he has just finished arguing for divine simplicity in *ST* 1.3. (See *ST* 1.6.4 co: “Everything is therefore called good from the divine goodness, as from the first exemplary effective and final principle of all goodness.” See also *ST* 1.6.3 co.) However, Thomas’s statement about the relationships among final, efficient and formal causes in *ST* 1.5.4 does not seem to be limited to their unity in God; he seems to be making a claim about their interconnectedness in general. Thus, the theological context of the passage, while significant, does not in any way detract from the integration of causes in Thomas’s broader etiology.

<sup>12</sup> *ST* 1.5.4 ad 1: “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod pulchrum et bonum in subiecto quidem sunt idem, quia super eandem rem fundantur, scilicet super formam, et propter hoc, bonum laudatur ut pulchrum. Sed ratione differunt. Nam bonum proprie respicit appetitum, est enim bonum quod omnia appetunt. Et ideo habet rationem finis, nam appetitus est quasi quidam motus ad rem. Pulchrum autem respicit vim cognoscitivam, pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent. Unde pulchrum in debita proportionem consistit, quia sensus delectatur in rebus debite proportionatis, sicut in sibi similibus; nam et sensus ratio quaedam est, et omnis virtus cognoscitiva. Et quia cognitio fit per assimilationem, similitudo autem respicit formam, pulchrum proprie pertinet ad rationem causae formalis.”

prominent in the objection and in the corpus—but rather by gesturing toward the difference between two faculties that can be related to the form upon which both beauty and goodness are founded.<sup>13</sup> The *ratio* of goodness, he explains, entails reference to appetite, whereas the *ratio* of beauty bespeaks a reference to some cognitive faculty (*vim cognoscitivam*). The reason Thomas offers in support of his linking beauty with cognitive faculties is found in a statement that comes as close as any to comprising his definition of beauty: “[those] things are called beautiful that please when they are seen / *pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent*.”<sup>14</sup> As we shall soon see, the term “*visa*”—things seen—can fairly be construed to include not only objects of vision but all objects of cognition. But since cognition occurs, on Thomas’s account, through forming a likeness (*per assimilationem*) of the thing known, and this likeness is taken with respect to the thing’s form, Thomas concludes that beauty properly pertains to the notion of formal causality just as it pertains to cognitive faculties. It is worth pausing to note, here, how fluidly Thomas moves between the etiological and psychological descriptions of beauty and goodness: for it suggests that Thomas envisions these two orders as deeply integrated, perhaps even as two different aspects of the same fundamental reality.

Interestingly, Thomas invokes the very same relationships he uses to distinguish between beauty and goodness in *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4 ad 1 to distinguish between truth and goodness when he discusses those modes of being elsewhere. In *De veritate* 1.1, for example, Thomas marks the difference between truth and goodness by referring to the relationships among being, intellect and appetite:

The soul has both knowing and appetitive powers. The name “good” expresses the correspondence of being to appetite, for, as we note in the *Ethics*, the good is “that which all desire.” The name “true” expresses the correspondence of being to the intellect.<sup>15</sup>

Later in the same work, Thomas uses the distinction between formal and final causality to mark the difference between truth and goodness:

The true and the good must therefore add to the concept of being a relationship of that which perfects. For in any being there are two [things] to be considered, namely, the formal character (*ratio*) of its species and the very act of being (*esse ipsum*) by which it subsists in that species. And so a being can be perfective in

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<sup>13</sup> Indeed, as will become more apparent below, beauty’s location “between” truth and goodness would seem to make it difficult to distinguish beauty from both truth and goodness using the etiological distinction between formal and final causality without invoking the psychological relations with cognitive and appetitive faculties: for the extension of formal into final causality seems to occur precisely *through* acts of cognition and appetite.

<sup>14</sup> Strictly speaking, this is only a *per posteriora* definition of beautiful things.

<sup>15</sup> *DV* 1.1 co.: “In anima autem est vis cognitiva et appetitiva. Convenientiam ergo entis ad appetitum exprimit hoc nomen bonum, ut in principio *Ethic*. dicitur quod *bonum est quod omnia appetunt*. Convenientiam vero entis ad intellectum exprimit hoc nomen verum.” English translations of *De veritate* are taken from *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, 3 vols., trans. Mulligan, McGlynn, and Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952–54), which I have occasionally emended.

two ways. (1) It can be so according to the formal character of its species alone. And thus the intellect is perfected by being, for it perceives the formal character of the being. But the being is still not in it according to its natural existence, and therefore the “true” adds this mode of perfecting to being. . . . (2) In another way, a being is perfective of another not only according to its specific character but also according to the existence it has in reality. In this fashion the good is perfective. . . . For, inasmuch as one being, by reason of its act of existing, is such as to perfect and complete another, it has the character of an end with respect to that thing that is perfected by it. And hence it is that all who rightly define good put in its notion something that pertains to its status as an end.”<sup>16</sup>

I believe we can gloss Thomas’s description of truth in this passage as relying on the formal causality of being.<sup>17</sup> Strictly speaking, of course, this description of truth relies on the relation between intellect and species, not form *per se*. But species is a kind of form,<sup>18</sup> and it seems clear enough that the kind of causality the species exerts with respect to the intellect is formal causality. With respect to Thomas’s description of goodness, no glossing is needed: he quite clearly identifies the notion of goodness as pertaining to the “end” or final cause.

The way in which Thomas uses the distinction between cognitive faculties and appetitive faculties and the distinction between formal causality and final causality to distinguish truth from goodness in *De veritate* is so strikingly similar to the way in which he distinguishes beauty from goodness in the *Summa* that one might be led to wonder whether beauty, rather than being identical with goodness (as was suggested in *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4 obj. 1), might in fact be identical with truth. Now, Thomas says nothing about how beauty might be distinguished from truth with regard to its proceeding by way of formal causality. To see how truth and beauty differ, then, we must return to Thomas’s psychological description of beautiful things as *quae visa placent*. There are two salient components of this description of beauty. First, the term “*visa*” (literally, “having been seen”) suggests that beautiful things are objects of vision; but there is no reason to believe that Thomas means to limit the set of beautiful things to objects of sense perception, much less to visible objects. In fact, Thomas’s own statements indicate that he means for beauty to be predicable of the objects of any “cognitive faculty” (*vis cognoscitiva*). Presumably, this would include all of the five senses as well as the faculty of intellect. In this

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<sup>16</sup> DV 21.1 co.: “Oportet igitur quod verum et bonum super intellectum entis addant respectum perfectivi. In quolibet autem ente est duo considerare: scilicet ipsam rationem speciei, et esse ipsum quo aliquid subsistit in specie illa; et sic aliquod ens potest esse perfectivum dupliciter. Uno modo secundum rationem speciei tantum. Et sic ab ente perficitur intellectus, qui percipit rationem entis. Nec tamen ens est in eo secundum esse naturale; et ideo hunc modum perficiendi addit verum super ens. . . . Alio modo ens est perfectivum alterius non solum secundum rationem speciei, sed etiam secundum esse quod habet in rerum natura. Et per hunc modum est perfectivum bonum. . . . 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.”

<sup>17</sup> The kind of formal causality operative here might best be described as “exemplarity” and ought not to be confused with the kind of formal causality at work in an immanent form (e.g., as in the case of entelechy).

<sup>18</sup> We can construe “species” here as something like “*forma totius*.”

regard, the term *visa* alone does little to distinguish the truth relation from the beauty relation, save, of course, to indicate that the beauty relation can exist in more faculties of the soul than the truth relation can. But Thomas's description of beauty also suggestively states that things are called beautiful not merely because they are seen but because they please (*placent*) when they are seen. Perhaps, then, the difference between truth and beauty can be found in the addition of pleasure to the act of the cognitive faculty.

In order to understand the relationship between the act of a cognitive faculty and the pleasure associated with this act, we shall have to consider Thomas's theory of pleasure. Thomas discusses pleasure in his commentary on book ten of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>19</sup> At its heart, Thomas states, pleasure (*delectatio*) is the perfection of operation:

[Aristotle] shows that pleasure is a perfection of activity. For we see that the same activity that we said is most perfect is also most pleasant; wherever a perfect activity is found in someone knowing (*cognoscente*), there too a pleasant activity is found. For a pleasure corresponds not only to touch and taste but also to every sense—and not only to sense, but also to contemplation (*speculationem*) inasmuch as the intellect contemplates some truth with certitude.

Among these activities of sense and intellect, that is most pleasant which is most perfect. But the most perfect activity is that belonging to a well-disposed sense or intellect in relation to the best of the objects that fall under sense or intellect. If then perfect activity is pleasant, and most perfect activity [is] most pleasant, it follows that activity is pleasant to the extent that it is perfect. Therefore pleasure is the perfection of activity.<sup>20</sup>

Two elements of this passage are relevant to our concerns. The first is Thomas's declaration that pleasure is not limited to the sense faculties but, rather, extends to all of the cognitive faculties, including the intellect. The second, and more important, is that Thomas takes pleasure to be a perfection of operation. Since the acts of cognitive faculties are most perfect when well-disposed cognitive faculties are related to the most perfect (or most well-suited) objects, these objects are, in some sense, the causes of pleasure. But this is precisely Thomas's description of beautiful

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<sup>19</sup> Another discussion of pleasure occurs in book seven of the *Ethics* (see Thomas's *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* [hereafter, *In NE*], bk. 7, ll. 11–14).

<sup>20</sup> *In NE*, bk. 10, l. 6 (par. 2025–26): “Ostendit quod delectatio sit operationis perfectio. Videmus enim quod eadem operatio, quam diximus esse perfectissimam, est etiam delectabilissimam. Ubi cumque enim invenitur in aliquo cognoscente operatio perfecta, ibi etiam invenitur operatio delectabilis. Est enim delectatio non solum secundum tactum est gustum, sed etiam secundum omnem sensum. Nec solum secundum sensum, sed etiam secundum speculationem intellectus, in quantum scilicet speculatur aliquid verorum per certitudinem.

Et inter huiusmodi operationes sensus et intellectus illa est delectabilissima quae est perfectissima. Perfectissima autem operatio est quae est sensus vel intellectus bene dispositi in comparatione ad optimum eorum quae subiacent sensui vel intellectui. Si ergo operatio perfecta est delectabilis, perfectissima autem delectabilissima, consequens est quod operatio in quantum est perfecta, sit delectabilis. Delectatio ergo est operationis perfectio.” Cf. *In NE*, bk. 7, l. 12 (par. 1493). English translations of the *Sententia libri Ethicorum* are taken from *Commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. by C. I. Litzinger (Chicago: Regnery, 1964).



things: they cause pleasure when they are “seen.” And inasmuch as the intellect also has well-suited, pleasure inducing objects, the intellect must be as capable of experiencing beauty as the senses are.<sup>21</sup>

So, the notion of beauty adds a note of pleasure to cognitive operation, and Thomas construes pleasure as a perfection of operation. But, in order to determine how beauty relates to truth, we must know more about the relationship between the cognitive operation and its perfection in pleasure. After all, one might plausibly suppose that a perfect operation is just a really good one, and that the perfection of pleasure merely adds an adverbial intensifier to run-of-the-mill cognitive operations. If so, it would not be obvious how beauty differs qualitatively from truth. Thomas provides resources we can use to address this problem when he distinguishes between desires, operations and pleasures in his commentary on the *Ethics*:

Desires are separated from activities by time, for we desire to do an act before we do it. They are also distinct by nature because activity is an act of a perfect thing but desire is an act of something imperfect and not yet achieved. But pleasures are closely connected with activities because both belong to something perfect. They are also indistinguishable according to time, for if something is not yet operative, there is no pleasure in its operation because pleasure concerns a present thing, as desire [concerns] a future one. And pleasure is so closely related to activity that it seems to be a matter of doubt whether activity is identical with pleasure.

However, we must not say that this is so. For, while there cannot be pleasure except in the activity of the sense or intellect, and those things that lack cognition cannot experience pleasure, neither is pleasure identical with the activity of intellect nor with the activity of sense. **For pleasure pertains more to the appetitive part.** And it is inappropriate if pleasure appears to some to be identical with activity simply because it is not separated from it.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Our strategy of seeking the nature of beauty by considering what pleasure is in the cognitive faculties appears to be validated by a remark that Thomas makes a few lines later in *lectio* six of *In NE*, bk. 10: “it is clear, he states, that there is a pleasure corresponding to each sense—as was just pointed out—from the fact that **we say and perceive that there are pleasant sights like beautiful forms** and sounds like melodious songs / dicit, manifestum esse quod secundum unumquemque sensum est delectatio, ut supra dictum est, per hoc quod **dicimus et experimur visiones esse delectabiles, puta pulchrarum formarum** et etiam auditiones, puta suaviū melodiarum.” (par. 2028, emphasis mine) Thomas’s illustration of visual delight confirms our suspicion: beauty is the object that causes pleasure in the cognitive senses.

<sup>22</sup> *In NE*, bk. 10, l. 8 (par. 2052-54): “Concupiscentiae enim distinguuntur ab operationibus tempore. Ante enim concupiscimus aliquid operari quam illud operemur. Distinguuntur etiam secundum naturam; quia operatio est actus perfecti, concupiscentia autem imperfecti et nondum habentis. Sed delectationes sunt propinquae operationibus, quia utrumque est alicuius perfecti. Sunt etiam et indiscretae secundum tempus; quia si nondum aliquid operatur, in tali operatione non delectatur; eo quod delectatio est rei praesentis, sicut concupiscentia rei futurae: et in tantum delectatio propinqua est operationi, quod videtur esse dubitabile, utrum operatio sit idem delectationi.

Nec tamen dicendum est quod sit ita. Non enim potest esse delectatio nisi in operatione sensus vel intellectus. Ea enim quae cognitione carent delectari non possunt.

Nec tamen est idem quod operatio intellectus, neque idem quod operatio sensus. **Nam delectatio magis ad appetitivam partem pertinet.** Est autem inconveniens si delectatio aliquibus videatur esse idem operationi, propter

The distinction between the operation of a cognitive faculty and the pleasure that perfects this operation is, thus, made with respect to pleasure's pertaining more to appetite. This fact might provide an intimation of what motivated the first objector in *Summa Theologiae* 1.5.4 to combine beauty and goodness: inasmuch as beauty is said with respect to pleasure, it has an ordering to the appetite.<sup>23</sup> But goodness is the object of appetite, so beauty and goodness would appear to be the same thing. Thomas's response to that claim was, of course, that beauty is said with respect to formal causality and an ordering to the cognitive faculty, not with respect to final causality and the appetite, as is the case with goodness. If, however, beauty is distinguished from truth by the addition of pleasure to cognitive operation, and if pleasure pertains to the appetitive faculty, then the text from the *Commentary on the Ethics* seems to come dangerously close to contradicting Thomas's own distinction between beauty and goodness in *Summa Theologiae* 1.5.4 ad 1. In short, Thomas appears to distinguish beauty from goodness by associating it with truth, but he distinguishes beauty from truth by associating it with goodness.

Thomas's two approaches to beauty are only a problem, though, if there is no "space" between cognitive activity and appetitive activity. As we have already noted in Thomas's *Commentary on the Ethics*, pleasure both perfects the cognitive operation (par. 2024) and pertains to the appetite (par. 2054). In his *Sentence Commentary*, Thomas offers some insight into one way in which the act of cognition might be related to the act of appetite:

We see two grades in cognition: first, that according to which intellectual cognition reaches out toward [some] one thing; second, when it receives a true thing as fitting and good. And unless some resistance emerge from this sort of cognition, love and pleasure follow, since, as the Philosopher says in the *Ethics*, pleasure follows upon unimpeded, perfect operation.<sup>24</sup>

When the cognitive act, accepting the true as fitting and good, is perfect and unimpeded, Thomas states, pleasure and love—the acts of the appetite—"follow" it. In another passage from the *Sentence Commentary*, Thomas formulates the same idea using the language of "extension:"

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hoc quod ab operatione non separatur." Emphasis mine.

<sup>23</sup> In an important sense, of course, what motivated the objection was the Dionysian tradition of connecting beauty and goodness. Perhaps the commonality of appetite in the construction of beauty and goodness also underlaid that tradition.

<sup>24</sup> In *SN* 1.15.4.1 ad 3: "Videmus autem in cognitione duos gradus; primum, secundum quod cognitio intellectiva tendit in unum; secundum, prout verum accipit ut conveniens et bonum. Et nisi sit aliqua resistantia ex tali cognitione, sequitur amor et delectatio; quia, secundum Philosophum, VII Ethic., cap. XIII et XIV, delectatio consequitur operationem perfectam non impeditam." The question of how cognitive and appetitive faculties interact in Aquinas's thought is infamously difficult. Perhaps the two most famous aspects of his teaching in which this question emerges are his doctrine of the practical intellect, in which the intellect must present an object to the appetite to be desired but the appetite itself must move the practical intellect to act, and his doctrine of faith, in which the intellect presents a proposition it cannot know to be true to the will but the will commands the intellect to assent to the proposition as true. On practical intellect, see, for example, *In NE* bk. 6, l. 2 (par. 1128), *In NE* 6.2, ll. 1–2, *ST* 1.82.4 ad 3, *ST* 1.79.11 sc, *DV* 14.4 co., *In SN* 3.23.2.3 co., *DV* 22.10 obj. 4, *In DA* III.10, ll. 14–15 and *In DA* bk. III.10, l. 15 (par. 821). On faith, see, for example, *ST* 2-2.1.4 co., *ST* 2-2.2.2 co., *ST* 2-2.2.9 co., *ST* 2-2.4.1 co., *ST* 2-2.4.2 co., and *DV* 14 (esp. articles one through four).

And since contemplation (*intuitus*) can be twofold, either of the true *simpliciter* or, beyond this, inasmuch as the true extends into the good and fitting, and this [latter] is perfect apprehension, therefore there is a twofold word, namely, of the thing brought forward that pleases, which breathes forth love, and this is the perfect word.<sup>25</sup>

This passage is a bit cryptic, but what Thomas seems to be saying is that perfect apprehension extends into pleasure and love; and thus intellect extends into appetite, and truth extends into goodness.

Thomas's *per posteriora* definition of beauty, we must now recall, turns completely on the pleasure of the cognitive act: *pulchra dicuntur quae visa placent*. Given Thomas's psychology of pleasure, it follows that the beautiful (the object that begets pleasure) is related to both the cognitive and appetitive faculties precisely as the cognitive extends into the appetitive through the pleasure that perfects cognition.<sup>26</sup> Stated in terms of the objects of these faculties, the place of beauty would seem to be the point at which the true extends into the good.<sup>27</sup> Or, to describe it more holistically, the beautiful is the ontological object proportioned to the cognitive faculty as the act of this faculty extends, through pleasure, into the activity of the appetite. Thus, beauty integrates the cognitive faculties with their correlative appetites, and, accordingly, integrates the true and the good as objects of these faculties.

At this point, we should stop to survey the ground we have covered. In Thomas's discussion of the relationship between beauty and goodness in *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4, he presented an etiology that distinguished formal causality from final causality while simultaneously insisting that final causality is integrated with formal causality inasmuch as it presupposes formal causality. When applying this etiology to the relationship between beauty and goodness, Thomas moved fluidly between the etiological categories of formal and final causality, on one hand, and the psychological categories of cognitive and appetitive powers, on the other hand. And when pressed to explain how the beautiful differs from both the true and the good, we found in Thomas's *Commentary on the Ethics* and his *Commentary on the Sentences* an

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<sup>25</sup> In *SN* 1.27.2.1 co.: "Et quia potest esse duplex intuitus, vel veri simpliciter, vel ulterius secundum quod verum extenditur in bonum et conveniens, et haec est perfecta apprehensio; ideo est duplex verbum: scilicet rei prolatae quae placet, quod spirat amorem, et hoc est verbum perfectum." In this passage, as well as in the preceding one, Thomas is of course drawing on Augustine's doctrine of the "inner word" as knowledge with love (see, e.g., *De trinitate* 9.13–9.15).

<sup>26</sup> There is, accordingly, no need to posit a distinct *aesthetic visio* or aesthetic faculty in Thomas's psychology. The cognitive and appetitive faculties suffice to explain how beauty is perceived, as long as one appreciates how these faculties can interact with one another.

<sup>27</sup> This is also where Jan Aertsen locates beauty: "the extension of the true to the good is the place of the beautiful." See "Beauty in the Middle Ages: A Forgotten Transcendental?," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 1 (1991): 68–97, especially p. 97. See also Aertsen's *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, (Köln: Brill, 1996), especially pp. 354–59, and Mark Jordan, "The Evidence of the Transcendentals and the Place of Beauty in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 29 (1989): 393–407, especially pp. 398–402.

account that integrates the true and the good, as well as the intellect and the will, by employing the image of the “extension” of one faculty into another (and thus of one ontological property—or object of a faculty—into another). In these texts, then, we observe Thomas integrating formal and final causality, cognitive and appetitive faculties, truth and goodness, and even the very orders of etiology, ontology, and psychology themselves. What is more, it is in his discussion(s) of beauty that the integration of these various elements of Thomas’s thought comes so clearly—perhaps most clearly—to the fore.

Now, all I can claim based on the preceding reflections is that Thomas’s remarks about beauty bring to the forefront of our consideration the integration of formal and final causality, of cognitive and appetitive faculties, of truth and goodness, and of the very orders of etiology, ontology and psychology. It is tempting, though, to make a much bolder claim, namely, the claim that beauty might actually effect the integration of all of these facets of Thomas’s thought.

In order to understand this bolder claim, we must take a step back and consider Thomas’s etiology, ontology and psychology on the grandest possible scale. When Thomas first attempts to explain what truth is *De veritate* 1.1, he quotes Aristotle’s assertion in the *De anima* that the soul “in some way is all things” in order to describe truth as a general mode of being that is comprised of a relation between being and intellect.<sup>28</sup> In the *De anima*, Aristotle also suggests that a faculty is actualized by its object, and thus we can deduce that the intellect is actualized by the being(s) to which it is joined in the truth relation.<sup>29</sup> But what sort of causality is at work in the actualizing of the intellect? Clearly, as we have noted above, it is formal causality. In *De veritate* 1.2, Thomas returns to Aristotle’s *De anima* to appropriate the notion that there is a kind of circular motion that originates in beings outside of the soul, then extends into the soul through the intellect, and finally reaches back outward toward being through the act of the appetite.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See *DV* 1.1 co., *in passim*. See also *De anima* III.8, 431b21 and III.4, 429a18.

<sup>29</sup> *De anima* III.4, 415a18–22; see also III.2, 426a1–11 and III.4, 429a11–18. See also *DV* 10.6 co.: “In another way, [the mind] is related to things as potency to act, inasmuch as determined forms of things are only potentially in our mind, but actually in things outside the soul.” It should be noted that the agent intellect also has its role to play in actualizing the passive intellect (see, for example, *ST* 1.85.1 ad 3 and 1.87.1 co.). But even the agent intellect, which is actually immaterial, is not in a state of actuality with respect to the determinate nature of the species of the thing known. See *Sentencia libri De anima*, bk. 3, ch. 4, lines 139–48: “The possible intellect is in potency to intelligibles just as the indeterminate is to the determinate: for the possible intellect does not possess determinately the nature of any sensible thing, whereas every intelligible is a determinate nature of some species; whence [Aristotle] said above that the possible intellect is related to intelligibles just as a tablet to determinate pictures. And, with respect to this, the agent intellect is not in act.” The English translation of the preceding passage from the *Sentencia libri De anima* is my own. The same text is found in the Pirotta edition at bk. 3, lectio 10, par. 738. Cf. *ST* 1.79.4 ad 4 and *ST* 1.87.1 ad 3.

<sup>30</sup> *DV* 1.2 co.: “The Philosopher speaks of a sort of circle formed by the acts of the soul: for a thing outside the soul moves the intellect, and the thing known moves the appetite, which tends to reach the things from which the motion originally started.” See *De anima* III.10, 433b21–30. On the importance of the *circulatio* motif in Aquinas’s writings, see Jan Aertsen, “The Circulation-Motive and Man in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas,” in *L’homme et son univers au Moyen Âge: actes du septième congrès internationale de philosophie médiévale*, ed. Asztalos and Wenin (Louvain: Centre DeWulf-Mansion, 1986), vol. 1, pp. 432–39; *idem*, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas’s Way of Thought* (New York: Brill, 1988), 40–5. See also Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Volume One: The Person and His Work*, trans. Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1996), 154.

Thus, Aquinas clarifies, the good that perfects the soul in the completion of this circular motion is the very same being from which the circular motion began. And, as should already be apparent, the kind of causality whereby the good operates on the appetite in order to actualize it is final causality. On the basis of these texts, one could say that the human soul is actualized by the being from which this circular motion originates and in which the motion finds its fulfillment, and this actualization happens in two ways: with respect to intellect, it occurs through formal causality, and with respect to appetite, it occurs through final causality. Furthermore, the formal causality of being acting on intellect gives rise to truth, and the final causality of being acting on appetite constitutes goodness.

No sooner than Thomas has made his point about the circular motion that connects being with intellect and appetite with being, though, he expands his description of truth to remind us that truth consists not only in the relation between human intellect and being(s) but also in the relation between the divine (practical) intellect and all created being(s).<sup>31</sup> Later in *De veritate*, Thomas also argues that all (created) beings receive their end from God, and that God's will has no end other than its own goodness;<sup>32</sup> thus, all created beings desire God (either implicitly or

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<sup>31</sup> *DV* 1.2 co.: "A thing is referred differently to the practical intellect than it is to the speculative intellect. For the practical intellect causes things, whence it is a measure of what it causes. But the speculative intellect, since it receives things, is in a certain sense moved by those things, and thus those things measure it. It is clear, therefore, that, as is said in the *Metaphysics*, natural things from which our intellect gets its scientific knowledge measure our intellect. Yet these things are themselves measured by the divine intellect, in which are all created things—just as all works of art [are] in the intellect of an artist. The divine intellect, therefore, measures and is not measured; a natural thing both measures and is measured; but our intellect is measured and does not measure natural things but only artifacts.

A natural thing, therefore, being placed between two intellects is called *true* as it conforms to either. It is said to be true with respect to its conformity with divine intellect in so far as it fulfills that to which it was ordained by the divine intellect. . . . With respect to its conformity with a human intellect, a thing is said to be true in so far as it is such as to cause a true estimate about itself. / Sed sciendum, quod res aliter comparatur ad intellectum practicum, aliter ad speculativum. Intellectus enim practicus causat res, unde est mensuratio rerum quae per ipsum fiunt: sed intellectus speculativus, quia accipit a rebus, est quadammodo motus ab ipsis rebus, et ita res mensurant ipsum. Ex quo patet quod res naturales, ex quibus intellectus noster scientiam accipit, mensurant intellectum nostrum, ut dicitur X *Metaph.*: sed sunt mensurae ab intellectu divino, in quo sunt omnia creata, sicut omnia artificata in intellectu artificis. Sic ergo intellectus divinus est mensurans non mensuratus; res autem naturalis, mensurans et mensurata; sed intellectus noster est mensuratus, non mensurans quidem res naturales, sed artificiales tantum.

Res ergo naturalis inter duos intellectus constituta, secundum adaequationem ad utrumque vera dicitur; secundum enim adaequationem ad intellectum divinum dicitur vera, in quantum implet hoc ad quod est ordinata per intellectum divinum. . . . Secundum autem adaequationem ad intellectum humanum dicitur res vera, in quantum nata est de se formare veram aestimationem."

<sup>32</sup> *DV* 22.1 co.: "Consequently, since **all natural things have been inclined by a certain natural inclination toward their ends by the prime mover, God, that to which everything is naturally inclined must be what is willed or intended by God. But since God has no end for His will other than Himself** and He is the very essence of goodness, all other things must be **naturally inclined** to good. **To desire (*appetere*), however, is nothing else but to strive for something, stretching, as it were, toward something that is destined for oneself.**

Accordingly, since all things are destined and directed by God to good, and this is done in such a way that in each one is a principle by which it tends of itself to good as if seeking its good, it is necessary to say that **all things naturally desire (*appetant*) the good.** / Unde, cum omnia naturalia naturali quadam inclinatione sint inclinata in fines suos a primo motore, qui est Deus, oportet quod illud in quod unumquodque naturaliter inclinatur, sit id quod est volitum vel intentum a Deo.

Deus autem, cum non habeat alium suae voluntatis finem nisi seipsum, et ipse sit ipsa essentia

explicitly), just as they are all known by God.<sup>33</sup>

Now, if we carry forward the image of circular motion Thomas appropriated from Aristotle, we might further suggest that while the human intellect and appetite are actualized by a circular motion that both begins and ends in created beings, these beings themselves are part of a circular motion that proceeds outward from God in the act of creation—here conceived as an act of *practical intellect*—and then returns toward the divine goodness in an appetitive quest for fuller metaphysical actuality. Thus, our understanding of the circular motion of the soul would have to be revised in order to clarify that the point *from which* the metaphysical actuality of the soul's circular motions begins—and therefore the point *at which* it ends—is God. What is more, the same would be true of all created beings, not just human souls, because all beings are known by the divine practical intellect and all beings are ordered to the divine goodness by some kind of appetite (whether it be rational appetite, sense appetite or natural appetite).<sup>34</sup> Now, since intellect and being are related through formal causality, we must construe the relation that exists between created beings and the divine (practical) intellect as an instance of formal causality,<sup>35</sup> and

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bonitatis: oportet quod omnia alia sint **inclinata naturaliter** in bonum. **Appetere autem nihil aliud est quam aliquid petere quasi tendere in aliquid ad ipsum ordinatum.**

Unde, cum omnia sint ordinata et directa in bonum a Deo, et hoc modo quod unicuique insit principium per quod ipsum tendit in bonum, quasi petens suum bonum; oportet dicere, quod omnia **naturaliter bonum appetant.**” Emphasis mine.

<sup>33</sup> *DV* 22.2 co.: “All things naturally desire God implicitly, but not explicitly. That this may appear clearly it should be observed that a secondary cause cannot influence its effect except insofar as it receives the power of the first cause. And just as the influence of an efficient cause is to act, that of a final cause is to be sought or desired. And so too, just as a secondary agent acts only by the efficacy of the first agent existing in it, in a similar way a secondary end is not sought except through the power of the principal end existing in it—namely, inasmuch as it is ordered to the principal end or has its likeness.

Accordingly, just as God, inasmuch as He is the first efficient cause, acts in every agent, so too, inasmuch as He is the ultimate end, He is desired in every end. But this is what desiring God implicitly means. For the power of the first cause is in the second as principles are in conclusions. But to reduce conclusions to their principles or secondary causes to their first causes belongs only to the power of reasoning. Hence only a rational nature can trace secondary ends back to God by a kind of way of resolution so that it might desire God Himself explicitly. And just as in demonstrative sciences a conclusion is not rightly drawn except by a reduction to first principles, in the same way the appetite of a rational creature cannot be rightly ruled save by an explicit desire for God Himself, either actual or habitual. / Dicendum, quod omnia naturaliter appetunt Deum implicate, non autem explicite.

Ad cuius evidentiam sciendum est, quod secunda causa non potest influere in suum effectum nisi in quantum recipit virtutem primae causae.

Sicut autem influere causae efficientis est agere, ita influere causae finalis est appeti et desiderari.

Et ideo, sicut secundarium agens non agit nisi per virtutem primi agentis existentem in eo: ita secundarius finis non appetitur nisi per virtutem finis principalis in eo existentem: prout scilicet est ordinatum in illud, vel habet similitudinem eius.

Et ideo, sicut Deus, propter hoc quod est primum efficiens, agit in omni agente, ita propter hoc quod est ultimus finis, appetitur in omni fine.

Sed hoc est appetere ipsum Deum implicate. Sic enim virtus primae causae est in secunda, ut principia in conclusionibus; resolvere autem conclusiones in principia, vel secundas causas in primas, est tantum virtutis rationalis. Unde sola rationalis natura potest secundarios fines in ipsum Deum per quamdam viam resolutionis inducere, ut sic ipsum Deum explicite appetat.

Et sicut in demonstrativis scientiis non recte sumitur conclusio nisi per resolutionem in prima principia, ita appetitus creaturae rationalis non est rectus nisi per appetitum explicitum ipsius Dei, actu vel habitu.”

<sup>34</sup> For more on Thomas's doctrine of natural appetite, see, for example, *DV* 21.2 co. and *DV* 22.1 co.

<sup>35</sup> As noted above, the kind of formal causality we are invoking here is best construed as exemplar causality rather than as, say, entelechy (though there is an obvious relationship between the two).

inasmuch as there is an *adaequatio* between created beings and the divine (practical) intellect, we must also acknowledge that this relation constitutes a truth relation. Similarly, since appetite and being are related through final causality, we must construe the relation that exists between created beings and the divine good as an instance of final causality; and inasmuch as all created things desire the divine being as a final cause, we must acknowledge that this relation constitutes a goodness relation. Thus, the perfection of all created things—and indeed the fulfillment of the providential ordering of these things that originates in the divine wisdom and finds its end in God’s own goodness—depends on this circular motion in which the divine (practical) intellect acts, through formal causality, to beget truths and true things and orders these truths and true things, through final causality, to desire and pursue a return to the highest good from which they originated. In other words, we can construe all creation on a kind of *exitus/reditus* model as a circular motion in which metaphysical actuality is poured forth by the divine intellect, through formal causality, to beget the truth relation in created intellects and indeed in all created things in order that these created things might then return to God as their final cause through the acts of appetite that beget the goodness relation.

If this is a fair rendering of Aquinas’s thought, it has important implications for the significance of beauty. For, if beauty comprises the extension of a cognitive faculty into appetite—and thus the extension of truth into goodness—and if the divine formal causality that begets all truth extends into the divine final causality that begets all goodness *via* the extension of cognition into appetite, then it is beauty that holds together the entire circular motion of creation.<sup>36</sup> Without beauty, the outpouring of being from the divine intellect that gives rise to truths and to truth things through formal causality would be severed from the call of the divine good that gives rise to appetite and to good things through final causality. Because of this, one might venture a bolder claim about beauty’s significance than the one I argued for in the earlier sections of this paper. For, if this account of the circular structure of Thomas’s etiology, psychology and ontology is correct, then Thomas’s discussions of beauty would not merely bring the integration of these aspects of his thought to the forefront of our consideration: beauty itself would effect this integration by connecting the orders of God’s formal and final causality precisely through the extension of cognitive faculties into appetites, which would concomitantly entail the extension of truth into goodness.<sup>37</sup> Thus, beauty would constitute a kind of lynchpin

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<sup>36</sup> Here, I think we might have an important indication of why Thomas does not *initially* distinguish beauty from goodness or from truth with respect to the etiological categories of final and formal causality but rather with respect to the psychological categories of cognitive faculties and appetitive faculties (as we see, e.g., in *ST* 1.5.4 ad 1): the extension of formal causality into final causality, which is the place of beauty in the etiological order, only occurs *through* the extension of cognition into appetite and therefore can only be understood with reference to the psychological categories of cognition and appetite.

<sup>37</sup> Intriguingly, for this to be correct, it seems that non-sentient beings would not only need to participate in divine final causality through “natural appetite” but also participate in divine formal causality through something analogous in the cognitive sphere. It is hard to imagine how this could be the case. It seems, though, that an answer would have to be sought by thinking carefully about how “natural appetite” counts as “appetite,” namely, inasmuch as God implants in some being a natural disposition to tend or incline toward an end that God has determined for it. In other words, natural appetite is something like the non-sentient creature’s participation in the order established by God’s willing the divine good for all things. The cognitive analog to this, I suspect, would have to be something like the non-sentient creature’s participation in the ordering of all things God knows by the divine wisdom. And this, it

that holds all of these aspects of Thomas's thought—and indeed all of these aspects of reality—together.

To summarize, then: it seems to me that Thomas's discussion of beauty—especially as we find it articulated in *Summa theologiae* 1.5.4—evokes the issue of integration on at least two levels. First, in this discussion of beauty, Thomas brings to the fore the integration of formal and final causality, of cognitive and appetitive faculties, of truth and goodness, and of the very orders of etiology, psychology and ontology. At this level, it seems evident that there is at least a correlation between Thomas's discussion of beauty and the various sorts of integration just described. Second, and more profoundly, when we understand the place of beauty as the extension of cognition into appetite and when we reflect on the *exitus/reditus* structure of Thomas's metaphysics, it becomes plausible to suggest that beauty itself might be the lynchpin that holds together all of the aspects of Thomas's thought—and indeed of reality—described above. In other words, we can see that there might be more than a mere correlation between Thomas's discussion(s) of beauty and the integration of formal and final causality, of cognitive and appetitive faculties, of truth and goodness, and of the very orders of etiology, psychology and ontology: there might in fact be a causal connection inasmuch as beauty itself effects the ultimate integration of all of these things.

Let me conclude, now, by offering a few suggestions for further reflection that might follow from this understanding of beauty and its place in Aquinas's thought. First, I think it would be fruitful to explore more fully the relationship between the integration of beauty and the ultimate integrating principle of Thomas's worldview, namely, God. In God, for example, we find perfect integration of formal and final causality because God's formal causality of things (namely, as evident in the divine ideas) is identical with God's final causality of things (namely, the divine goodness). Similarly, in God, truth and goodness are one, as are intellect and will. Moreover, the very orders of etiology, ontology, and psychology are also perfectly unified in God, for the divine truth that God knows is identical with the divine intellect that knows it, and this divine truth (again, construed as divine ideas) is the formal cause (or exemplar) of all created things. Similarly, the divine goodness that God loves is identical with the divine will that loves it, and this same goodness is the final cause of all created beings. Moreover, the divine formal causality and the divine final causality are truly one, just as the divine intellect and the divine will and the divine truth and the divine goodness are perfectly one. The integration of all of these things in the divine simplicity raises interesting possibilities for reflecting on the nature of God's experience of Godself: if God's knowledge of Godself is perfectly united with God's love of Godself, does that then suggest the kind of integration of cognition and appetite that characterizes Thomas's description of the beautiful? And, if so, might we then construe the divine act as an eternal experience of beauty?<sup>38</sup>

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seems, would be more or less equivalent to each created thing's receiving its form from the divine exemplar—a form that not only makes a created being to be the kind of thing it is, but also has a place within the broader ordering of creation (as determined by divine wisdom) and an inclination to act in a characteristic way toward a particular end, which inclination extends into natural appetite (as determined by the divine will for the divine goodness).



If this is the case, some interesting implications might follow. For example, if the beatific vision is a participation in God's own vision of Godself,<sup>39</sup> then the beatific vision might also be regarded as an experience of beauty. Likewise, if faith is a dim foreshadowing of the beatific vision,<sup>40</sup> and if *sacra doctrina* is a participation in the *scientia* of God and the blessed,<sup>41</sup> then we might expect both faith and theology to have a dimension of the beautiful that anticipates the beauty of the beatific vision.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, if we can indeed identify a causal connection between beauty and the integration of etiology, psychology, and ontology in Aquinas's thought, it would be tempting to speculate that it is precisely when beauty fades from philosophical and theological reflection and becomes more primarily the purview of poets and artists in the centuries following Aquinas's writing that philosophers and theologians become increasingly vulnerable to various bifurcating "-isms" that plagued them from the fourteenth century onward (with apologies for the "plague" pun). For example, without the integration of intellect and will effected by beauty, the specters of rationalism and voluntarism rear their heads. And without the integration of etiology (or ontology) and psychology effected by beauty, solipsistic subjectivism and naively uncritical objectivism become more viable. Interestingly, we find all of these bifurcating "-isms" gaining a foothold in philosophy at one time or another in the late medieval and modern periods. Of course, it would take more than I have done in this paper to make the case that it is a "forgetfulness" of beauty that opens so many later medieval and modern thinkers to the bifurcating influences of rationalism, voluntarism, subjectivism, naive objectivism, and so forth—especially given that Thomas and his medieval predecessors devoted relatively few lines to writing about beauty in its own right rather than simply discussing it as part of a larger discourse focused on some other topic.

All I can claim in this paper is that Thomas's remarks about beauty bring to the fore an integration of formal and final causality, of cognitive and appetitive faculties, of truth and

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<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to note here that at least some of Thomas's statements about beauty were made in the context of discussions about predicating beauty of God essentially and about authoritative appropriations of the attribute of beauty to the second person of the Trinity, viz., the Word that proceeds into Love. See, for example, *ST* 1.39.8. See also *In SN* 1.15.4.1 ad 3, *In SN* 1.27.2.1 co. and *In SN* 1.27.2.2, where Thomas discusses the relevant issues—including the extension of knowledge into love, divine naming, and appropriation of attributes to the Son—without explicitly invoking the term "beauty."

<sup>39</sup> Given Thomas's conviction that beatitude can only be found in a vision of the divine essence (see, for example, *ST* 1-2.3.8 co.), and given that divine simplicity entails the divine essence's being identical with the divine act of God's knowing Godself (see, for example, *ScG* 1.45), it seems to follow straightforwardly that the beatific vision must comprise a participation in God's own vision of Godself. However, for some texts that support the notion that the beatific vision is a participation in God's own knowing of the divine essence, see *ST* 1.12.1 co., *ST* 1.12.6 co., *ST* 1.12.8 co., *ST* 1.12.9, *ST* 2-2.2.3 co., *ScG* 3.51.6, *ScG* 3.53.2, *ScG* 3.58, and *ScG* 3.63.2.

<sup>40</sup> On faith as a participation in the beatific vision, see *DV* 14.2 co. and *Commentary on the Gospel of John* ch. 1, l. 4, par. 120.

<sup>41</sup> See *ST* 1.1.2 co.

<sup>42</sup> It is probably noticeable that I am trying to avoid describing God's experience of Godself, the beatific vision, faith, or even *sacra doctrina* as "aesthetic." I suppose one could use that term, though—and it would be very *chic* to do so—as long as one understood it to mean the act of cognition extending into pleasure and not as taking on any of the myriad other meanings the term has come to possess in modern discourse.

goodness, and of the very orders of etiology, ontology and psychology that protects Thomas—and has protected generations of Thomists—from these sorts of bifurcating “-isms.” Beyond this, I think we can plausibly suggest that beauty itself might even effect these various integrations that maintain the felicitous holism of Aquinas’s teaching and of the world as he construes it. But these humble reflections will have to suffice for this essay.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> I wish to thank my friend Lee Cole for his helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. I would also like to thank Montague Brown for the invitation to present a shorter version of this essay at a meeting sponsored by the Institute for Saint Anselm Studies.