

## CHAPTER 8

# More on the Good

If one searched the Boethian tractate for a *ratio boni*, some expression or account that could be substituted for “good,” he would come back with his hands empty. Well, not entirely. The Aristotelian account is implicit in the argument developed in the course of stating the problem. *Bonum est quod omnia appetunt*. We might perhaps find intimations of *bonum est diffusivum sui* as well in the tractate. But what are we to understand by “Whatever is good” let alone “Guinness is good for you?”

Boethius warned us at the outset that he was going to be oblique and elusive. But it leaves one gasping that such a key word is given so little conceptual content. When we are asked to imagine creatures without God and think of something as fat and red and good, “good” was no more explained than fat and red. Is this nitpicking?

We are in effect being told how the term “good” is common to God and creatures. He is the First Good, creatures are secondary goods. Consider this comment of Aquinas.

His solution comes to this that the existence of the First Good is goodness by its very definition, because the nature and essence of the First Good are nothing other than goodness; the existence of the second good is good but not in the very account of its essence, since goodness itself is not its essence, but rather humanity or the like; but its existence is good by relation to the First Good, who is its cause, to whom it is related as to a first principle and an ultimate end, in the way something called healthy is referred to the end health or called medicinal from the effective principle of the art of medicine.<sup>1</sup>

1. Redit ergo eius solutio ad hoc quod esse primi boni est secundum propriam rationem bonum, quia natura et essentia primi boni nihil aliud est quam bonitas; esse autem secundi boni est quidem bonum, non secundum rationem propriae essentiae, quia essentia eius non est ipsa bonitas, sed vel humanitas, vel aliquid

Thomas seems to be spelling out here our worst fears about Boethius's solution. It looks as though the creature is known to be good only with reference to God and thus is denominated good from the goodness of God. But a term is used analogically when it is used to speak of a group of things, some or one of which saves its usual meaning and the others referred to by a secondary meaning dependent on the first or familiar one. To understand what is meant by saying "aspirin is healthy," I have to know what is meant by saying "Joe is healthy." Thus Thomas, in introducing Boethius's thought experiment whereby God is conceptually set aside, says this: "remoto per intellectum primo bono, ponamus quod cetera sint bona: quia ex bonitate effectuum devenimus in cognitionem boni primi: conceptually setting aside the First Good, we posit the other things as good; after all it is from the goodness of its effects that we come to knowledge of the First Good." (n. 60) The Boethian solution, in startling contrast to the account Thomas gives of names common to God and creature, seems to make the divine goodness more knowable to us than created goodness. The introduction of the standard examples of what Thomas calls analogous names,<sup>2</sup> namely, "healthy" and "medical," suggests that God functions as do the quality health and the art of medicine in those examples.

It is just this that Thomas seems to guard against when he introduces the notion of two kinds of goodness in creatures, one consisting of their relation to God, the other absolute, with the latter subdivided into whether the creature is regarded as *perfectum in esse* or *perfectum in operari*. That subdivision recalls the famous contrast of *ST Ia. 5. 1. 1m* between *ens simpliciter*

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aliud huiusmodi; sed eius esse habet quod sit bonum ex habitudine ad primum bonum, quod est eius causa: ad quod quidem comparatur sicut ad primum principium et ad ultimum finem; per modum quo aliquid dicitur sanum, quo aliquid ordinatur ad finem sanitatis; ut dicitur medicinale secundum quod est a principio effectivo artis medicinae. (n. 62)

2. In contrast to Aristotle who seems never to have used the Greek *kat'analogan* or *analogia* to speak of the relation between meanings of the same term. Rather Aristotle speaks of equivocation *pros hen* or *pollakos legomena*. Contrast Aristotelian and Thomistic usage in *Metaphysics IV.1* and *lectio 1*.

*bonum secundum quid* and *ens secundum quid*/bonum simpliciter.

Thus arises a question that becomes part of Thomas's standard repertoire, *ut ita dicam*, namely: *Utrum omnia sint bona bonitate prima*: Are all things good by the first goodness?<sup>3</sup> This question is very much like another which was fateful for the history of interpreting what Thomas meant by analogous names: *Utrum sit una sola veritas secundum quam omnia sunt vera*: Whether there is only one truth whereby all things are true? If there is numerically one goodness and numerically one truth whereby all creatures are called good and true, this is what is meant by extrinsic denomination. When the question about truth is asked in the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas expresses a universal rule about names analogously common.

In order to see this it should be noted that when something is univocally predicated of many it is found in each of them according to its proper notion, as "animal" in every species of animal. But when something is said analogically of many things, it is found according to its proper notion in only one of them; the others are denominated from it. As "healthy" is said of animal, urine and medicine, though health is found only in the animal and medicine is denominated healthy from the animal's health, as effective of, and urine, as a sign of, that health. And though health is not in the medicine or urine there is in each something through which the former causes and the latter signifies health.<sup>4</sup>

Now if it were the case that every analogous name involves extrinsic denomination from what is first, and if creatures are denominated good and true analogically from God, it looks as if extrinsic denomination is all we have.

3. Cf. *Q.D. de ver.*, q. 21, a. 4; *Summa contra gentiles*, I, cap. 40; *ST Ia*, q. 6, a. 4.

4. Ad cuius evidentiam, sciendum est quod, quando aliquid praedicatur univoco de multis, illud in quolibet eorum secundum propriam rationem invenitur, sicut 'animal' in qualibet specie animalis. Sed quando aliquid dicitur analogice de multis, illud invenitur secundum propriam rationem in uno eorum tantum, a quo alia denominatur. Sicut 'sanum' dicitur de animali et urina et medicina, non quod sanitas sit nisi in animali tantum, sed a sanitate animalis denominatur medicina sana, inquantum est effectiva, et urina, inquantum est illius sanitatis significativa. Et quamvis sanitas non sit in medicina neque in urina, tamen in utroque est aliquid per quod hoc quidem facit, illud autem significat sanitatem. (*Ia*. 16.6)

We are not surprised, accordingly, to find Cardinal Cajetan in his commentary on this text deny as universally true of analogous names the rule Thomas gives. Indeed, it is exemplified only in the case of what Cajetan says are misleadingly (*abusive*) called analogous names. Nor are we surprised when Cajetan refers us to his own book on the subject.<sup>5</sup>

Cajetan's *De Nominum Analogia*<sup>6</sup> is easily the most influential interpretation of what St. Thomas means by analogous names, and it is a work based on a misunderstanding of a text parallel to that in *ST Ia. 16. 6*. The text is *I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1m. Cajetan took Thomas to be giving a threefold division of analogous names, and that supposed division forms the structure of his opusculum and has haunted discussions of analogy since its appearance in the last decade of the 15th century.<sup>7</sup>

The text on which Cajetan based his opusculum is a reply to an objection and can only be understood with reference to the

5. "Ad secundum vero dubitationem dicitur, quod illa regula de analogo tradita in littera, non est universalis de omni analogiae modo: imo, proprie loquendo, ut patet I Ethic., nulli analogo convenit, sed convenit nominibus 'ad unum' vel 'in uno' aut 'ab uno,' quae nos abusive vocamus analogae. Veritas autem, si comparetur ad res et intellectus, est nomen 'ab uno': quoniam in intellectu solo est veritas, a qua res dicuntur verae. Si vero comparetur ad intellectus inter se, sic est nomen analogum: nam proportionaliter salvatur, formaliter tamen, in quolibet intellectu cognoscente verum. Esse ergo nomen aliquod secundum propriam rationem in uno tantum, est conditio nominum quae sunt 'ad unum' aut 'ab uno,' etc.: et non nominum proportionaliter dictorum. Veritas autem, respectu intellectus divini et aliorum, proportionale nomen est. Et ideo non sequitur quod in solo Deo sit. Iam enim dictum est in solutione primi dubii, quod omni praedicato formaliter de pluribus, convenit plurificari ad plurificationem subiectorum sive illud sit univocum, ut 'animal', sive proportionale, ut 'ens,' etc.—De huiusmodi autem differentia nominum plene scriptum invenies in tractatu 'De Analogia Nominum.'" Cajetan, in *Iam*, q. 16, a. 6, n. VI.

6. Thomas de Vio Cardinalis Cajetan (1469–1534), *Scripta Philosophica: De Nominum Analogia et De Conceptu Entis*, ed. Zammit and Hering, 1952. The first edition by Zammit alone appeared in 1934.

7. In both *The Logic of Analogy* (The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1961), and *Studies in Analogy* (The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1968), as well as in various articles written since the latter appeared, I have contested the Cajetanian interpretation. Nonetheless, it flourishes as if profound difficulties with it have not been pointed out. See, for example, the otherwise excellent book of Avital Wohlman, *Thomas d'Aquin et Maimonide* (Paris, Les Editions de Cerf, 1988). I am currently engaged in rewriting *The Logic of Analogy*, which has been out of print for some years.

problem it sets out to solve. Is there only one truth whereby all things are true?

It seems that all things are true by one truth which is uncreated truth. For as was said in the solution of the preceding article, true is said analogously of things in which there is truth, as health of all healthy things. But there is numerically one health from which the animal is denominated healthy (as its subject) and medicine healthy (as its cause), and urine healthy (as its sign). It seems therefore that there is one truth whereby all are called true.<sup>8</sup>

The argument is clear enough. An animal, medicine, and urine are called healthy analogously and we can see that they are so denominated from the health that is in the animal; there is no need to look for a plurality of healths, one the quality of the animal, another the quality of the medicine, the other the quality of urine. These three are gathered under and share one name because medicine causes and urine shows the quality health in the animal. If this is the case with the analogous term “healthy” and if “true” is said to be analogously common to God and creature, then, so goes the objection, there must be numerically one truth in virtue of which this is so.

The assumption is that a feature of the things called healthy is a necessary condition of their being named analogously, such that wherever there is an analogous name that feature will be present. How does Thomas handle this objection?<sup>9</sup>

8. Videtur quod omnia sint vera una veritate quae est veritas increata. Sicut enim dictum est in solutione praecedentis articuli, verum dicitur analogice de illis in quibus est veritas, sicut sanitas de omnibus sanis. Sed una est sanitas numero a qua denominatur animal sanum, sicut subjectum ejus, et medicina sana, sicut causa ejus, et urina sana, sicut signum ejus. Ergo videtur quod una sit veritas qua omnia dicuntur vera.

9. Ad primum igitur dicendum, quod aliquid dicitur secundum analogiam tripliciter: [1] *vel secundum intentionem tantum, et non secundum esse*; et hoc est quando una intentio refertur ad plura per prius et posterius, quae tamen non habet esse nisi in uno; sicut intentio sanitatis refertur ad animal, urinam et diætā diversimode, secundum prius et posterius; non tamen secundum diversum esse, quia esse sanitatis non est nisi in animali. [2] *Vel secundum esse et non secundum intentionem*; et hoc contingit quando plura parificantur in intentione alicujus communis, sed illud commune non habet esse unius rationis in omnibus, sicut omnia corpora parificantur in intentione corporeitatis. Unde Logicus, qui

In reply to the first objection it should be noted that something is said according to analogy in three ways: [1] *According to intention alone and not according to being*, as when one intention is referred to many, first to one, later to others, but exists in only one of them, as the intention of health is referred to animal, urine and diet in different ways, according to prior and posterior, but not according to being, because health exists in the animal alone; [2] *According to being and not according to intention*, and this happens when many things are made equal in a common intention which does not exist as such in all, as all bodies are made equal in the intention of corporeity. Hence the dialectician who considers intentions alone says that the word "body" is predicated univocally of all bodies, but this nature does not exist according to the same notion in corruptible and incorruptible bodies. For the metaphysician and the natural philosopher, therefore, who look on things as they exist, neither the term "body" nor any other is said univocally of the corruptible and incorruptible, as Aristotle and Averroes make clear in *Metaphysics* X. [3] *According to intention and being*, as when there is equality neither of common intention nor of being, as "being" is said of substance and accident. In such it is necessary that the common nature enjoy some existence in each of the things of which it is said, but differing according to greater and less perfection. So too I say that truth and goodness and the like are said analogically of God and creature. All these must exist in God and creature according to a notion of greater and less perfection, from which it follows that, since it cannot exist numerically the same in all, there are diverse truths.

On the face of it, it does not seem surprising that Cajetan should have read this response as saying that there are three kinds of analogous name, although this assumption almost immediately gets him into difficulties. The second kind of analogous name is a univocal term! A generic term covers an inequal-

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considerat intentiones tantum, dicit, hoc nomen, corpus, de omnibus corporibus univoce praedicari: sed esse huius naturae non est ejusdem rationis in corporibus corruptibilibus et incorruptibilibus, ut patet X Meta., text. 5, ex Philosopho et Commentatore. [3] *Vel secundum intentionem et secundum esse*; et hoc est quando neque parificatur in intentione communi, neque in esse; sicut ens dicitur de substantia et accidente; et de talibus oportet quod natura communis habeat aliquod esse in unoquoque eorum de quibus dicitur, sed differens secundum rationem majoris vel minoris perfectionis. Et similiter dico quod veritas et bonitas et omnia hujusmodi dicuntur analogice de Deo et creaturis. Unde oportet quod secundum suum esse omnia haec in Deo sint, et in creaturis secundum rationem majoris perfectionis et minoris; ex quo sequitur, cum non possint esse secundum unum esse utrobique quod sint diversae veritates.

ity among its species, expressed by their differences, but does not thereby cease to be a univocal term. The inequality (*non parificantur*) of the species is said to be *secundum esse*. It is not to be confused with the inequality, the order *per prius et posterius* of a plurality of meanings of a common term. Thomas's response comes down to this. The objector is confusing the *per accidens* and the *per se*. While in the example of "healthy" the quality health from which denomination is made exists in only one of the analogates, this is *per accidens* to being an analogous term.

Why? Because sometimes in things named analogously the *res significata* of the common term exists in only one of the analogates, whereas sometimes it exists in all of the analogates, though of course *per prius et posterius*. From this, one concludes not that there are two kinds of analogous name but that these variants are *per accidens* to analogous naming. To underscore this, Thomas points out that inequality *secundum esse*, an order thanks to which one of the things named is primary and another secondary, is compatible with the term's being univocally common to them.

In short, Cajetan embraces the fallacy Thomas is intent on dissolving, joins what Thomas is putting asunder, and defines the truly analogous name as one in which there is both an order among the meanings of a common term and possession of the denominating form by all the analogates. But what Cajetan calls true analogy is invariably illustrated, in the text of Thomas, by what Cajetan considers to be an analogous name only abusively.

What then is the meaning of the rule for analogous names in *ST Ia.16.6: quando aliquid dicitur analogice de multis, illud invenitur secundum propriam rationem in uno eorum tantum, a quo alia denominantur*: when something is said analogically of many things, it is found according to its proper notion in only one of them? It does not mean that the form from which denomination is made exists in only one of the analogates. The rule is not a rule for "healthy" alone but is meant to illuminate what is being discussed in the text where it is formulated, namely, "true" as analogically common to God and creature and, to underscore



the relevance of this for our purposes, for “good” as common to God and creature. In names said analogously of God and creature, as in all analogous names, the *ratio propria* of the name is found in one of them alone.

The *ratio propria* is the way of signifying the denominating form that is controlling in understanding other, extended ways of signifying that form.<sup>10</sup> Whether the example be “law” or “virtue” or “healthy” or “being,” the rule will always obtain. This is not the place to discourse on analogous names as such, but this much is enough to prevent us from thinking that the divine names involve some special kind of analogy invented for the purpose. If they did, Thomas would not illustrate by “healthy” what he means by saying that God and creature share a name analogously. Needless to say, our talk about God will, like the knowledge it reflects, reveal that we are at the very limits of our creaturely powers.

When we say of God that He is good or one or true or being, we are extending terms whose controlling meanings make them appropriate to creatures—their *rationes propriae* are rooted in creatures, not in God—and we use them to speak of the causative, creative source of these created perfections. The only way we can know God is via His effects; naming follows the path of knowing; the only way we can talk of God is to use of Him words whose proper meanings were formed in knowing creatures.<sup>11</sup>

The problem with which this chapter began will now be clearer. Unless we have a meaning or meanings for “good” appropriate to our ordinary commerce with creatures, the term cannot be extended to God with appropriate alteration of meanings. Is it fair to say that Boethius does not provide us with any such controlling meaning? Is it fair to suggest that for him the controlling meaning is the divine goodness and that only derivatively are creatures good, known to be good and called good?

10. In short, a *ratio nominis* is a compound of the *res significata* and a *modus significandi*.

11. These are of course commonplaces, but cf. *ST*, Ia, qq. 12 and 13.



A text as oblique and deliberately difficult as the *De hebdomadibus* obviously should not be queried as if it were MacGuffey's Reader. Indeed one reaction to this problem could be to say that if it is one for Boethius it is also one for Thomas.

After all, it is Thomas in his commentary who says that the "*esse primi boni est secundum rationem propriam bonum*: the existence of the First Good is good according to its proper notion" and that "*esse autem secundi boni est quidem bonum, non secundum rationem propriae essentiae*: for a second good to be is indeed good, but not because of the proper account of its essence." (n. 62) Is Thomas saying that God saves the *ratio propria* of the analogously common term "good" and that creatures do not, and that thus creatures are named good with reference to God's goodness, not the reverse?

The answer to the exegetical question is simple, but a wider question is raised. In the text, "*ratio propria*" means the essence or nature of the thing, what would be expressed in its definition, and the point is that goodness is identical with what God is, but this is not the claim made of the creature, "*quia essentia eius non est ipsa bonitas, sed vel humanitas, vel aliquid huiusmodi*: because goodness as such is not its essence, but rather humanity, or the like." (n. 62) In short, *ratio propria* is not to be understood here as it must be in the rule for things named analogously given in *ST*, Ia. 16. 6. That said, are we not told on considerable authority that it is from God that all fatherhood is named both in heaven and on earth?

Of course of the things named "good," God is ontologically first; if He were not good, nothing else would be. He is the source of all goodness, both in heaven and on earth. Even as we, or St. Paul, say such things, we are employing a human language whose first meanings and referents are the things of our experience, the things we see and touch and weigh and alter with our arts. The suppleness of language within even the most restricted range of "terrestrial" usage reveals the scale and order and unifying that characterize our efforts to know that world. Thomas was struck, in reading Aristotle's *Physics*, with how a term like

*morphe*, whose obvious meaning is the external shape or contour of an object, is used in graded ways to mean any property of a thing, then its constituting essential element. All this in the first book of the *Physics*. And language so developed is the only one we have for speaking of God when knowledge of the things of this world enables us to come to knowledge of the invisible things of God. To speak of God's will and mind and ideas involves stretching our language to the breaking point. We come to do it with ease, as we learn easily to say the Lord's Prayer, but the Gospels knew we needed images and pictures of human fathers to catch this new meaning.

What is first in our knowledge and language may be last on the ontological scale, and vice versa. Aristotle had already suggested this. It is what characterizes names analogously common to God and creatures. The language as used of creatures controls its extension to speak of the divine. But that which is indicated in God, however imperfectly, is the source of the created perfections. This is captured by the distinction made between the order *secundum impositionem nominis* and the order *secundum rem nominis*.<sup>12</sup>

It seems clear enough that in *De hebdomadibus* Boethius adopts a sapiential viewpoint, the viewpoint of the theologian who would see everything with reference to God. In Thomas's words, the opusculum is concerned with the procession of good creatures from the good God: *de processione bonarum creaturarum a Deo bono*.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, like Thomas in *Summa theologiae*, Boethius has to rely on our knowledge of the contrast between good things and the First Good. It could be said that, to a great degree, though not exclusively, the axioms state that contrast.

In the *Disputed Question on Truth*, Thomas confronts the problematic of our discussion when he asks if all things are good because of the First Goodness. The Boethian tractate is referred

12. See Thomas *In V Metaphysicorum*, lectio 5, n. 824–826.

13. *In Boethii de trinitate*, ed. Calcaterra, prologus, n. 7.

to again and again, and becomes the source of the objection that creatures are extrinsically denominated good from the divine goodness. Isn't that what *De hebdomadibus* establishes by showing the incoherences that result from trying to understand created goodness without reference to the First Good? Having recalled this in q. 21, objection 1, the next objection continues:

But notice that there is no goodness in creatures when the goodness in God is ignored because the goodness of the creature is caused by God's goodness, not because the thing is formally denominated good from God's goodness.<sup>14</sup>

Now this, as it happens, is Thomas's own view. The objector, however, continues by rejecting what I have just quoted and adding that when something is denominated solely with reference to another it is extrinsically denominated, that is, not denominated from a form intrinsically possessed. And the old stand-by healthy is invoked. Urine and exercise are denominated from the health in the animal, not from some intrinsic form of health in themselves. And isn't that the way creatures are denominated good from the divine goodness?

Thomas replies by distinguishing two ways in which a thing can be denominated something with reference to another. Sometimes it is the reference or relation itself which is the reason for the denomination, and that is the case with calling urine and exercise healthy with reference to the health of the animal.

Something is denominated with respect to another in a second way when the cause and not the respect is the reason for the denomination; just as air is said to be illumined by the sun, not because air's being related to the sun is for it to be lit, but because the direct opposition of air to sun is the cause that it is lit; and this is the way the creature is called good with respect to Good. (*ibid.*, ad 2m)<sup>15</sup>

14. Sed dicendum quod ideo hoc contingit quod non intellecta bonitate in Deo non est bonitas in aliis creaturis, quia bonitas creaturae causatur a bonitate Dei, non quia denominetur res bona bonitate Dei formaliter.

15. Alio modo denominatur aliquid per respectum ad alterum, quando respectus non est ratio denominationis, sed causa; sicut si aer dicatur lucens a sole; non quod ipsum referri aerem ad solem sit lucere aeris, sed quia directa oppositio

God is the cause of the goodness of the creature but that is not the meaning of the term when the creature is called good, as if for the creature to be called good meant “is dependent on God.” The creature would neither be nor be good if God did not cause it, but when we say that a thing is or is good, the meaning of these terms is not “is caused by God.”<sup>16</sup>

A disputed question is always far more complicated and nuanced than a parallel discussion in the *Summa theologiae* but in neither case is what Thomas says of the goodness of creatures, while owing much to Boethius, confined to the crabbed coded Boethian doctrine. The *sed contra* est of Ia, q. 6, a. 4 (which asks the by now familiar question: *Utrum omnia sint bona bonitate divina*) provides a crisp summary of Thomas’s view.

On the contrary, all things are good just insofar as they are. But all things are not called being from the divine existence, but from their own existence. All things are not good by the divine goodness, therefore, but by their own goodness.<sup>17</sup>

It is not God’s goodness that is the goodness of creatures any more than His existence is theirs: there is created goodness and created existence thanks to which creatures are and are good. Thomas, in the body of the article, reminds us that Plato posited a realm of transcendental entities to which appeal had to be made to explain the fleeting things of this world. Odd as that sounds in the case of “man” and “white” and the like, Thomas says it makes a good deal of sense, even Aristotelian sense, to speak of something that is being as such and goodness as such.

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aeris ad solem est causa quod luceat; et hoc modo creatura dicitur bona per respectum ad bonum.

16. At the end of *Q. D. de veritate*, q. 21, a. 5, Thomas gives this interpretation of Boethius’s exercise in mentally separating creatures from God. “Dato igitur quod creatura esset ipsum suum esse, sicut et Deus; adhuc tamen esse creaturae non haberet rationem boni, nisi praesupposito ordine ad creatorem; et pro tanto adhuc diceretur bona per participationem, et non absolute in eo quod est. Sed esse divinum, quod habet rationem boni non praesupposito aliquo, habet rationem boni per seipsum; et haec videtur esse intentio Boethii in lib. de Hebdomada.”

17. *Sed contra* est quod omnia sunt bona in quantum sunt. Sed non dicuntur omnia entia per esse divinum, sed per esse proprium. Ergo non omnia sunt bona bonitate divina, sed bonitate propria.

And how do created good things relate to God who is goodness itself?

Anything can be called good and a being by way of some assimilation, however remote and defective, insofar as it participates in that which is goodness and being in its essence, as the foregoing has made clear. In this way something is called good from the divine goodness as from the first exemplar, efficient and final cause of all goodness. Nonetheless, each thing is called good from a likeness of the divine goodness inherent in it which is the goodness formally denominating it. So it is that there is one goodness of all and many goodnesses.<sup>18</sup>

We have here an account which incorporates the Boethian account into a more comprehensive one, the final pay-off on the quasi demur registered in the exposition when, after analyzing Boethius's solution, Thomas notes that there is a *duplex bonitas*, a twofold goodness, in creatures. They are and are good thanks to the causality of the First Good, but as effects of the First Good they have their own existence and goodness thanks to which they are remotively and defectively like their cause. We of course are first aware of creatures and our notions of existence and goodness reflect this epistemological priority which grounds a priority of nomenclature. Only when creatures are seen to require a cause very different from themselves does the possibility arise of speaking of being itself and goodness itself as referring to a unique entity. Then it can be said that because He is we are, because He is good other things are good. In *De hebdomadibus*, Boethius favors this sapiential approach, the *via descensus*; it is thoroughly characteristic of Thomas that he should constantly remind us of the complementary *via ascensus*.<sup>19</sup>

18. "A primo igitur per suam essentiam ente et bono, unumquodque potest dici bonum et ens, inquantum participat ipsum per modum cuiusdam assimilationis, licet remote et deficienter, ut ex superioribus patet. Sic ergo unumquodque dicitur bonum bonitate divina, sicut primo principio exemplari, effectivo et finali totius bonitatis. Nihilominus tamen unumquodque dicitur bonum similitudine divinae bonitatis sibi inhaerente, quae est formaliter sua bonitas denominans ipsum. Et sic est bonitas una omnium; et etiam multae bonitates." *Ia*, q. 6, a. 4, c.

19. See Thomas *In Boethii de trinitate*, ed. cit. lect. 2, q. 2, a. 1 (= Wyser and Decker q. 6, a. 1, ad tertiam questionem), p. 382a-b.

If the problem of *De hebdomadibus* arises from the seeming impossibility of saying of a creature either that it is good substantially or that it is good accidentally, it generates a further problem as to the relation between divine and created goodness. The tractate concludes by referring created goodness to the First Good as if what it means to say of a creature that he is good is that his existence is caused by God in whom existence and goodness are identical. On the other hand, it seems clear that we can know the divine goodness only on an analogy with created goodness. The question then becomes precisely that Thomas asked in *ST*, Ia, q. 13, a. 6: Are names analogically common to God and creature said first of God or of creature?

If a term is used metaphorically of God, Thomas notes, it is clear that the creature would be the point of reference for understanding its use in speaking of God. Furthermore, if all divine names were negative or relative, the same would be true—the reference to the creature would be primary. But what of affirmative divine names, names like “wise” and “good?” When we say that God is wise or that God is good, we do not mean that He is the cause of created wisdom or goodness. What do we mean?

For when God is called good or wise this means not only that He is the cause of wisdom or goodness but that these preexist eminently in Him. On that account it should be said that with respect to the perfection meant by the name they are said first of God rather than of creatures, because these perfections emanate from God to creatures. But with respect to the imposition of the name, these are first imposed on creatures since we first know them.<sup>20</sup>

This does not mean that, contrary to the rule we discussed earlier, two of the analogates save the *ratio propria* of the com-

20. *Summa theologiae*, Ia, q. 13, a. 6. Cum enim dicitur *Deus est bonus vel sapiens*, non solum significatur quod ipse est causa sapientis vel bonitatis, sed quod haec in eo eminentius praeexistunt. Unde, secundum hoc, dicendum est quod secundum rem significatam per nomen, per prius dicuntur de Deo quam de creaturis: quia a Deo huiusmodi perfectiones in creaturas manant. Sed quantum ad impositionem nominis, per prius imponuntur creaturis, quas prius cognoscimus.

mon term, or that there are two *rationes propriae* of “good” according to one of which it is first said of creatures and according to the other first said of God. In order to say that God’s goodness is a perfection He would have even if He had never created, we must mention created goodness. The relation of divine goodness to created goodness is not a real relation, but only one of reason. But it cannot be considered an epistemological prop we can dispense with so as to consider the divine goodness in itself. We have no such direct access.

When then it is said that God is good, the meaning is not that God is the cause of goodness, or that He is not evil, but rather this: *that which we call goodness in creatures preexists in God*, and indeed in a higher way. From this it does not follow that to be good pertains to God insofar as He causes goodness, but rather the reverse: because He is good, He diffuses goodness to things.<sup>21</sup>

Thus the *ratio boni* as said of God includes the *ratio propria* of created goodness even while expressing the fact that God’s goodness is prior to created goodness.

But what then of the fact that created goodness is an effect of God’s causality? Must this not be the meaning of “good” as said of creatures? The text we quoted earlier (*Ia*, q. 6, a. 4) provides the answer. God is the good of the creature as its first exemplar, efficient and final cause. That is the final word on created goodness. But it cannot be the first. The creature is called good by a similitude of the divine goodness inherent in the creature, which is its own goodness whereby it is formally denominated good. Only when this formal goodness is grasped, and understood in terms of what is intrinsic to the creature, can there be an ascent to the divine goodness. But that ascent can never let go of its

21. Cum igitur dicitur *Deus est bonus*, non est sensus *Deus est causa bonitatis*, vel *Deus non est malus*: sed est sensus, *id quod bonitatem dicimus in creaturis, praexistit in Deo*, et hoc quidem secundum modum altiore. Unde ex hoc non sequitur quod Deo competat esse bonum inquantum causat bonitatem: sed potius e converso, quia est bonus, bonitatem rebus diffundit. *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 2. Thomas adds a quotation from Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana*, I, 32: *inquantum bonus est, sumus*: because He is good, we are.



springboard, as Thomas makes clear in his account of “God is good.”

Thus it is that Thomas’s account of divine and created goodness incorporates but is not exhausted by the account he found in the *De hebdomadibus* of Boethius.

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