

Goodness and Beauty

The Transcendentals

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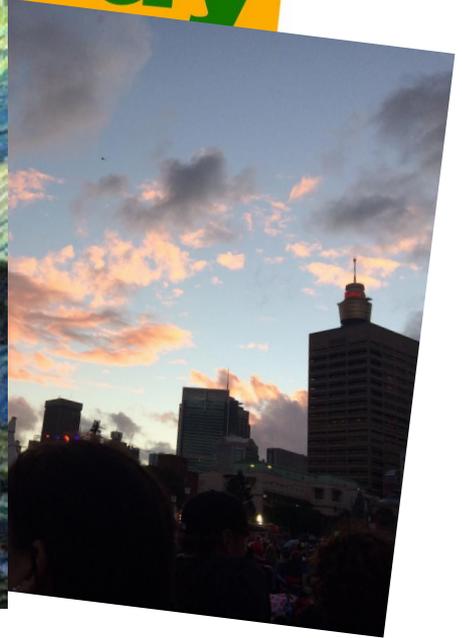
What we will be covering:

- Transcendental Goodness
 - Common notions of Goodness and Goodness as the desirability of Being
 - Goodness as perfection: perfection to imperfect is as act to potency
 - Types of Goodness – simpliciter, secundum quid
- Transcendental Beauty
 - The notion of beauty and its connection to the other transcendentals
 - Beauty and perfection
 - Degrees of beauty

Notions of goodness in everyday life



Day



What is
Good
or
goodness?



Good, insofar as it *has being* according to its nature

- Everything that is, is good
- Being = Good
 - *ens est bonum convertuntur*
- Good is whatever preserves a thing's *natural perfection*.
 - Eg. Acting, living, perfecting oneself
- Things are good according to *the extent* of their esse
 - Eg. Participated esse, participated good
 - Degrees of goodness because of different degrees of participation in Being
 - What about GOD?



**What did Aristotle mean by
Goodness or “*the Good*”?**

**“*bonum est quod omnia
appetunt*”**

Good, insofar as it is *desirable*

- Something “good” is desirable – “loveable” in metaphysical terms
- The capability of being desired is actually a perfection of things
- Goodness of things depend on their esse, NOT on human desires
 - Things are not good because we want them
 - We want them insofar as they are good or can lead to another good
- Goodness is objective- we desire something because it is good; it is not good because we desire it

Goodness

Goodness → perfection that gives rise to the desire awakened in us, not the desire in itself.

Notion of perfection is inseparable with that of the good.

Perfection – the source of desire

Our will moves towards the object only if the object has a certain degree of perfection.



Is my desire for the Good like God's?

- Human will: the innate desire for the good, just as the intellect for truth.
 - does not desire a particular good, but universal good, goodness as such.
 - An innate desire for God within us.
- God's will is different than ours
 - God's will can only have one object: Himself. [why?]
 - Strictly speaking he does not love creatures for the reason that they are good and He desires them as such. Rather, God endows being (goodness) upon creatures because he loves them. His love shown in creating them.
- Just as God's ideas are foundation for ontological truth, God's love is the foundation of goodness of things



Going
Deeper
into
Perfection

Metaphysics of Perfection

What is perfect?

Perfect when in act

Imperfect when in potency

∴ Perfect = Act

First understanding of perfection:

All is perfect....kinda

Every creature with act of being = perfect....at least to a degree

You, dogs, cockroaches are all perfect in a sense

Creatures = HAVE perfection

Their Goodness is equivalent to the perfection they have

Second Understanding of Perfection

St Thomas and Aristotle

i. With respect to its dimensions (*quantitas continua*)

Rose is perfect if petals are naturally well-proportioned



← Perfect Rose

Imperfect Rose →



Second Understanding of Perfection

St Thomas and Aristotle

ii. With respect to its operative powers (*quantitas virtutis*)

Speedy horse is perfect

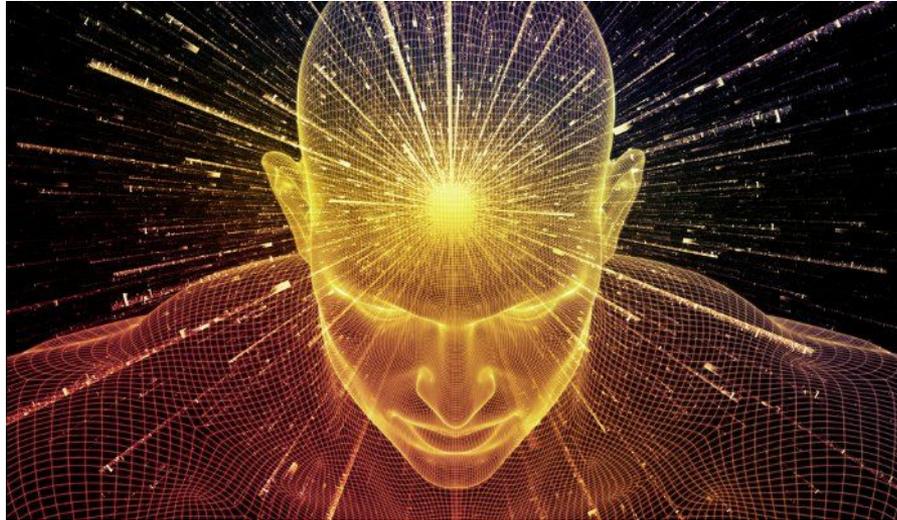


Second Understanding of Perfection

St Thomas and Aristotle

3. With respect to the attainment of its end (*consecutio finis*)

Man who acquired wisdom is perfect



Third understanding of perfection

St Thomas and Aristotle

Also perfect if it can perfect other beings (esp. with spiritual creatures)



Perfection in God?

St Thomas and Aristotle

God is perfect and all perfections exist in God

St Thomas argues that:

- (i) **God is the first efficient cause of all things.**
- (ii) **God is esse per essentiam (act of being by essence)**



Based on the above, what is the relationship then between *goodness* and *perfection*?

Types of Goodness

1. “Everything which is” is good - (bonum secundum quid)

a.k.a transcendental / ontological goodness

Every being insofar as it has the act of being, has a degree of perfection, and accordingly a degree of goodness.

Types of Goodness

2. That which reaches its end, is good - (bonum simpliciter) - good without any further qualification

E.g. Good sprinter



**HENCE only in God there is perfect identification between
Being and being good.**

Types of Goodness

3. That which is perfect is also perfective of other beings. It spreads its goodness, so to speak, to others.

A truly perfect being spreads its goodness to the extent that it is perfect.

Bonum est diffusivum sui. Goodness of beings is diffusive

“It is better to enlighten than merely shine, better to make known the truth one contemplates than to simply contemplate them. - St Thomas Aquinas

Transcendent Goodness as a Final cause

Good → Final Cause

God is Goodness by essence → we tend to him as our end.

But happiness is reached only with the **perfect satisfaction of the appetite**, when there is **nothing left to desire**, and the capacity of loving is fully actualised (STh I-II,19,10).

**Can ontological
goodness mean
that bad
actions can be
good??**



Max Scheler- Value Theory

- Max Scheler- the basis of morality is value, not derived from the good or being, but aprioris of human action
 - If being is good, why is the fact of stealing bad?
 - Debunking this problem:
 - Being = fullness of perfection. He understood Being only as the fact of existing
 - Stealing has goodness secundum quid, but not simpliciter. The reason is that the act lacks a perfection that is due to it. Lacking perfection = evil

Up Next:
Transcendental BEAUTY

A central illustration of a human brain, split vertically into blue (left) and yellow (right) halves. The brain is surrounded by various colorful elements: a nose with arrows indicating smell, an ear with a musical note and sound waves, an eye with a dashed line and arrows, a hand with a gear and arrows, and a stylized face with a white circle. The background is a mix of blue, orange, and green. The text "INTELLECT and WILL" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the brain.

INTELLECT and WILL

BEAUTY

-PULCHRUM-

Thomas: the beautiful is that which is pleasing to behold (i.e. know or possess)

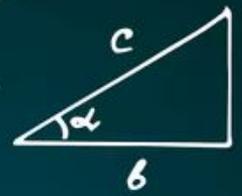
Different
levels or types
of beauty

$$\sin \alpha = BC = \frac{a}{c};$$

$$\cos \alpha = OB = \frac{b}{c};$$

$$\operatorname{tg} \alpha = \frac{OB}{OA} = \frac{b}{a};$$

$$\operatorname{ctg} \alpha = \frac{OA}{OB} = \frac{a}{b};$$



$$\sin 2\alpha = 2 \sin \alpha \cos \alpha;$$

$$\cos 2\alpha = \cos^2 \alpha - \sin^2 \alpha;$$

$$\operatorname{tg} 2\alpha = \frac{2 \operatorname{tg} \alpha}{1 - \operatorname{tg}^2 \alpha};$$



$$\alpha^\circ = \frac{180}{\pi} \alpha; \quad \alpha = \frac{\pi}{180} \alpha^\circ;$$

$$\sin^2 \alpha + \cos^2 \alpha = 1;$$

$$\frac{\sin \alpha}{\cos \alpha} = \operatorname{tg} \alpha;$$

$$360^\circ = 2\pi; \quad 180^\circ = \pi;$$

$$\sin \alpha \cdot \operatorname{csc} \alpha = 1;$$

$$\frac{\cos \alpha}{\sin \alpha} = \operatorname{ctg} \alpha$$

$$u = A \sin(\omega t + \varphi)$$

$$u = a \sin \omega t + b \cos \omega t$$

Intelligible
beauty



$$A \left(-\frac{b}{2a}; \frac{4a - b^2}{4a} \right)$$

$$x = -\frac{b}{2a};$$

$$\Delta = 4ac - b^2$$

$$a > 0;$$

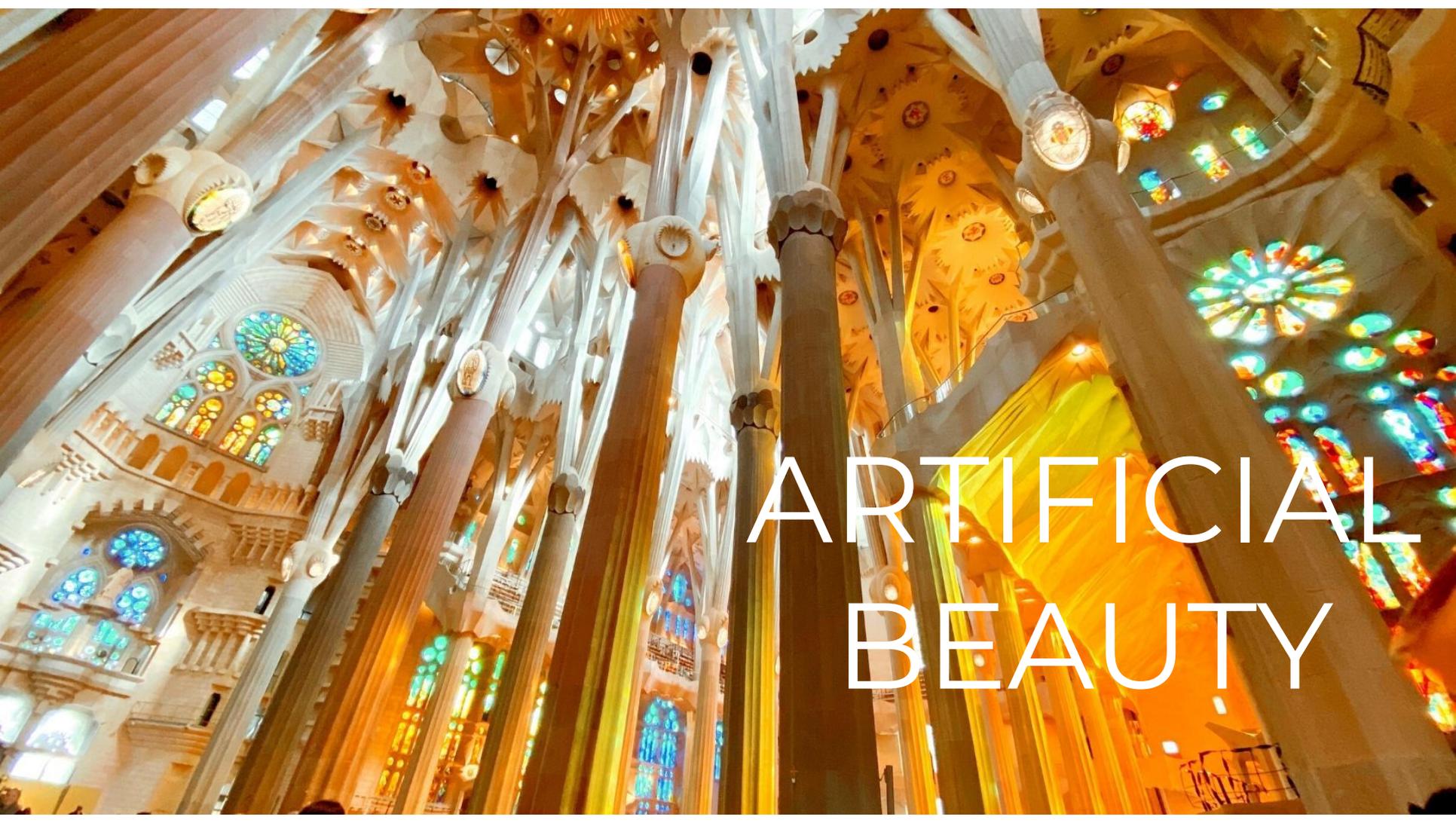
$$\operatorname{tg} \varphi = \pm a^2 \left(\frac{3}{\Delta} \right)^{\frac{3}{2}};$$

A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is shown from the chest up, holding a sword with both hands. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, top with a dark strap across her chest. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

Sense-perc
eptible
beauty

A serene landscape photograph of a sunset over a large body of water. The sun is positioned just above the horizon, creating a bright, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, transitioning from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow near the horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and majestic. The text 'NATURAL BEAUTY' is centered in the upper half of the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

NATURAL BEAUTY



ARTIFICIAL
BEAUTY

Beauty as
convertible with
Being and Goodness

Beauty and Goodness

- Beauty can be considered a special type of goodness, since we have an appetite (or a natural tendency) for the beautiful.
- This peculiar appetite is satisfied by the contemplation of beauty.
- Whereas most goods satisfy appetites when they are *attained*, the good of beauty gives rise to delight simply by being known.
- Think of this plot of land when looked at by Van Gogh or a developer



Beauty and BEING

- Things are pleasing because they are beautiful, and not the other way around.
- Beauty elicits delight but this delight is NOT the object of the appetite, just as the sensation of fullness is not the object of the food appetite
- What is the source of beauty? The act of being
- God is subsistent Beauty



Beauty and Perfection

There are other aspects of beauty besides ontological beauty

St. Thomas resolves the Augustinian concept of beauty (based on a certain kind of unity) into the following three essential elements:

Completeness

Harmony

Clarity

These three things are always present to everything which is beautiful *simpliciter*, in the full sense, and not just ontologically





COMPLETENESS
OF THE WHOLE

Perfectio rei
-the ontological foundation
of harmony and clarity

HARMONY

of the parts

-proportio debita partium
**-proportion and unity in
variety**



A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on their eyes and nose. They are wearing dark-rimmed glasses. The lenses of the glasses are highly reflective, showing a clear, vibrant reflection of a modern city street with tall buildings and a car. The background behind the person is heavily blurred, creating a bokeh effect with soft, out-of-focus light spots in shades of blue, green, and white. The overall mood is one of clarity and focus.

CLARITY

CERTAIN DEFINITENESS OR SPLENDOUR
-renders a beautiful object visible to the mind

DEGREES OF BEAUTY-

according to modes of participating in the act of being

Spiritual Beings

always possess
perfectio rei- never
limited by matter

each angel is a
species in itself

particular
harmonious
relationship with
their last end God,
hence a particular
beauty

Material Beings

no individual has all
the perfections of its
species

Degrees and types:
beauty of a soul that
is closer to God
(simpliciter) vs
physical beauty

Think about the
ugliness of sin



HUMAN PERCEPTION OF BEAUTY

There needs to be a proportion between the knowing powers and the beauty which one apprehends

- i. Beauty eludes some people, just as truth eludes some.
- ii. Aesthetic education is needed.

That is in part why there is subjectivity in appreciation in beauty. But ultimately beauty does not solely depend on personal tastes or subjectivity. It has an objective basis in being.