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God and Truth, Goodness, and Beauty

On the basis of classical philosophy, it is assumed and justified that every real being has such properties that make it a being as being. These properties are inherent in every being, and therefore they are called universal or transcendental; some of them are absolute and some are relational. The latter include: truth, goodness and beauty¹.

The separation of relational transcendentals takes place thanks to the accrediting of being to the mental faculties of mankind. In this case, mankind is the recipient (addressee) of the being and the content contained in it. Paying attention to the transcendental is possible from another angle as well: “being” is related to its efficient cause, which we call the Creator or maker. Since the cause produces effects similar to itself, in the aspect of relational transcendentalities, “being” is ordered toward the intellect and the will of the cause that caused it. There is no doubt that mankind, as a personal entity, makes all kinds of beings. The same should be said of God. Therefore, this question is not without significance: to what extent is the efficient cause itself (God) related to the transcendental properties that belong to its effects (in mankind)? In this context, the aim of this article is to find an answer to the question of what it means that God is truth, good and beauty². In addition, the meaning of the individual transcendentals will be explained, as their classical understanding is being lost or abused more and more often, it seems to me.

The attempt to explain this problem will be based on the views of realistic philosophy shaped mainly by the thoughts of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, but also by contemporary representatives of this trend, which include, inter alia, Mieczysław A. Krąpiec OP and Andrzej Maryniarczyk SDB. Many of their studies are devoted to truth, goodness, and beauty as universal properties of being³. They will be appropriated as such.

¹ Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Transcendentalia a poznanie metafizyczne*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O prawdzie*, trans. A. Białek, Lublin 2001, pp. 179-181.

² Indeed, this article is about the concept of God (the Absolute) developed on the basis of realistic (classical) philosophy and agreed with the concept of God of the Christian religion of the Catholic denomination. Cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Filozofia i Bóg*, in: same, *Odzyskać świat realny*, Lublin 1993, pp. 274-280.

³ It should not be forgotten that properties of this kind are also present in theological knowledge and also appear in revelation, as reported in the Scriptures. “Jesus answered him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one

1. God and truth

A metaphysical analysis of the concept of truth leads to the separation of three aspects: depending on how the “being” is ordered to the intellect, truth is distinguished in a cognitive (logical), ontological and metaphysical sense. Each of them has implications for God.

1.1. Cognitive dimension of truth

Many authors of philosophical works on God state that he is truth itself. In the texts of St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, God receives several definitions related to truth: first truth, uncreated truth, and eternal truth⁴. In view of the above statements, it is worth exploring in what sense God should be equated with truth and what this term means.

In the colloquial language we often use the expression “true”. For example, we give real reasons for our decisions, we tell real stories, we drink real coffee, we value real friends, we discover our true calling, etc. The usage of the term “real” in such phrases, in one sense, aims to emphasize the authenticity and reality of what we are working upon. On the other hand, it is used to dispel fears that we are experiencing something only contrived or false.

Philosophical considerations about truth usually go in one of two directions: one of them is the cognitive approach to truth, whereas the other is the ontological one. In the cognitive sense, the “truth” is that the one who “knows” agrees with what he presumably “knows”. The “truth”, in this sense, is therefore the relation of the person to the existing reality (i.e., its correspondence to reality). The point is that we can speak of “truth” in cognitive terms only when we know reality as it is, and when we faithfully pass on the resultant knowledge to others. If, for example, I find that this year’s winter is snowy and it “really” is, then I reconcile the intellect with reality. This kind of agreement is “true” in a cognitive (logical) sense and this understanding is considered as the classic definition of truth⁵.

It should be emphasized that the starting point in the formulation of a logical “truth” is a specific thing or phenomenon that occurs and can be known; the intellect does not create the “truth”, but merely reads it, does not create it, and thereby agrees with the reality that is

comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14: 6). “Jesus said to him: Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone” (Mk 10: 18). “You are the most beautiful of the sons of men, grace is poured over your lips: therefore God has blessed you forever” (Ps 45: 3).

⁴ Cf. STh 2-2, q.1, a. 1.

⁵ Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Racjonalność i celowość świata osób i rzeczy*, Lublin 2007, p. 72.

independent of itself. Existing things and events take precedence over our mere response to them. Therefore, it is said that truth follows existence⁶. It is worth noting that the concept of “truth”, at least in the classical sense, takes place only in connection with personal (intellectual) cognition and appropriation; this is because the truth is expressed in judgments by which something is affirmed or denied⁷. On the same principle, its opposite, i.e. falseness, can also be defined. Falseness occurs when you claim something that doesn’t match reality. For example, when I say that the winter is mild, and in fact it is harsh, then I am professing a lie.

But what does the expression “God is real” mean in this context? If God is said to be true, then we refer to “true” either His existence or His nature. In the first sense, the phrase “true God” informs us that His existence is real. And if God exists in reality, then “It is true that God exists” is, itself, true. In this sense, we agree with God’s reality and proclaim the truth that is grounded in what it actually is⁸.

In a second sense, the term “true God” contains information, for example, that His words or promises are true or that God’s works are true. In this sense, „It is true that God became man” is a sentence that corresponds to reality when in fact God assumed humanity. Once again we notice that the truth is preceded by the occurrence of a specific event. Only in its consequence do we pronounce a judgment consistent with it—i.e., the truth—or contrary to it or distorted—i.e., false⁹.

“Truth” in a cognitive sense may not only apply to existing things, but also to God. In this sense, it presupposes the priority of events related to him. To claim that God is true (in existence or in essence), one must first know God’s reality. Only then can one’s claims made about God be judged as true or false. Generally speaking, the “truth” about God is when we come to terms with what actually happens. Therefore, it is of great importance to get to know the existence and nature of God honestly, through the means of both faith and reason¹⁰.

⁶ Cf. T. Pawlikowski, *Prawda następstwem istnienia. Problem prawdy w interpretacji św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, Lublin 2013, p. 289.

⁷ These types of activities are performed by the intellect. Cf. P. S. Mazur, *O nazwach intelektu*, Lublin 2004, pp. 90-95; S. Swieżawski, *Wstęp do kwestii 80*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Traktat o człowieku. Summa teologii 1, 75-89*, trans. S. Swieżawski, Kęty 2000, p. 274.

⁸ Cf. STh 1, q. 2, a. 3; Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa contra gentiles*, vol. 1, trans. Z. Włodek, W. Zega, Warszawa 2003, pp. 41-53.

⁹ Cf. Arystoteles, *Metafizyka*, trans. K. Leśniak, Warszawa 2009, pp. 173-174.

¹⁰ Cf. Z. J. Zdybicka, *Bóg czy sacrum?*, Lublin 2007, pp. 143-174.

1.2. Ontological dimension of truth

Apart from the cognitive dimension of “truth”, its ontological aspect plays an important role as well. Different dimensions (ways of understanding) “truth” result from a different assignment of cognition to “reality” itself—in other words, the intellect to the thing which, on the basis of realistic philosophy, we call “being”. The point is that, on the one hand, the intellect can be related to a thing, and on the other hand, a thing can be related to the intellect. These different ways of assigning intellect determines the two dimensions of truth: logical and ontological¹¹.

If truth in the cognitive sense means the reconciliation of the intellect with the thing that exists, then truth in the ontological dimension is the inversion of this connection. Then it takes the form of assigning things to the intellect. What does this matter? I assert that the point of reference plays an important role here. In the case of ontological truth, it is not the thing that a person knows, but the intellect with which he or she learns and, consequently, plans a thing that will transpire, given the right conditions. Hence the ontological truth consists in the conformity of things with the intellect, that is, reality with human cognition¹².

In the case of logical truth, reality is “ahead” of cognition, and therefore it is possible to reconcile cognition (intellect) with reality. In the case of ontological truth, the opposite is true—cognition precedes reality¹³. I will illustrate the occurrence of such a dependence with a simple example: the dependence of things on cognition takes place, for example, when a carpenter first devises a table design and then, through a series of activities, makes a piece of furniture according to his own idea. Getting to know the table comes first in relation to the example just given. This knowledge manifests itself through a project that must necessarily be planned in advance; only then it is put into practice—that is, “made”. Agreeing things with intellect means checking whether the thing made corresponds to the project (whether it “agrees” with it). If the table made is as the carpenter predicted it, then the ontological truth is indeed true. This kind of truth is a quality of the intellect that designs a thing and then controls its compliance with a “plan” to complete it, of some sorts¹⁴.

¹¹ Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Racjonalność i celowość świata osób i rzeczy*, p. 72.

¹² Cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Metafizyka. Zarys teorii bytu*, Lublin 1984, p. 170.

¹³ Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O prawdzie*, p. 24.

¹⁴ At this point it should be added that apart from the ontological truth, there can also be an ontological falsehood. It appears when a thing derived from the intellect does not agree with its project. How does it happen to a man to say that things do not correspond to their designs, so it would be necessary to reflect more deeply whether the things that God creates according to his own ideas may also be incompatible with them? If not, the ontological falsehood would not apply to God.

The “problem” of ontological truth takes a new perspective when one takes into account the distinction between the human and divine intellect, which corresponds to two kinds of “beings” that exist in the world: some of them are ontically related to the intellect of a person (e.g., the aforementioned table), and others to the intellect of God (e.g., personhood itself). “Beings” designed and made by people constitute the world of culture, while “beings” planned and created by God constitute the world of nature. Therefore, it is customary to talk about the intellect of the “maker” and the intellect of the “Creator”. Each of them has its mark on the things that are “designed” and “created”, or “made”¹⁵.

Since the ontological truth is a property of the intellect that projects a specific “being”, God is the ontological truth in relation to the creatures he has intended and called into existence. The ontological truth expresses that “being” is related and dependent on the intellect that invented it (and then “made” it); God himself plays this role in the natural world. It can be said that the intellect of God is the source and measure of the existence of all creatures. Hence, to affirm that “God is truth” in an ontological sense is to hold that he is the source of things that exist according to his plan, both in form (idea) and matter¹⁶.

Thanks to the intellect, God (or a person) inscribes his project into the emerging being, at the same time another intellect can know (read) what has been “written” into being. In this way, knowing the “being” is identical with knowing the “truth” of being. Using the language of realistic philosophy, one can therefore say that “being” itself is also true¹⁷; this aspect of truth has come to be known as metaphysical.

1.3. Metaphysical dimension of truth

The question of truth is one of the fundamental questions studied in philosophy; it also belongs to those concepts that are characterized by multidimensionality. After presenting the truth in its cognitive and ontological aspect, it remains to pay attention to its metaphysical meaning, and then relate it to God. But how does metaphysical truth differ from cognitive and ontological truth? I contend that the cognitive dimension of truth consists in reconciling the intellect with the “thing”, while truth in the ontological sense is the reconciliation of “things” with the intellect. It can be therefore be said that these aspects of truth, taken together, complement each other. However, recognizing these two dimensions of truth does not exhaust

¹⁵ Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa contra gentiles*, pp. 127-131.

¹⁶ Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Kwestie dyskutowane o prawdzie*, vol. 1, trans. A. Aduszkiewicz, L. Kuczyński, J. Ruszczyński, Kęty 1998, q. 1, a. 4 (further: *De veritate*).

¹⁷ Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Racjonalność i celowość świata osób i rzeczy*, p. 74.

the entirety of “truth”; there is also a third aspect. This third aspect concerns the “thing” itself as derived from intellect. As truth in the logical sense is a property of a judgment, and truth in an ontological sense a property of the intellect, so metaphysically, truth is a “property” of a thing, that is, “being” itself¹⁸.

Since every “being” is related to the intellect that designed it, one should infer the constant dependence of beings on thinking (knowing) entities. Both “persons” and God are sources of existing beings. A project of a specific being is born in the subject, which can then acquire “real” existence. Thus, the truth about “being” first exists in the person who invented it, and then, as a result of various activities (creative or made), it becomes a “property” of the designed being that thereby obtains “real” existence. Then the project (or “truth”) no longer exists only in the originator’s intellect, but is “inscribed” (or placed) into the being itself, thereby gaining independent existence. The originator’s intention is embodied in the thing done. Thereafter, it carries the “truth”; it determines that a “thing” is what it is. Therefore, the intellect of the originator—or maker—determines the “truth”, and the “thing” thereafter realizes it¹⁹.

The concept of the “project” at hand can be more specific, and thereby indicate what it consists of. For example, the “project” decides what the “thing” (its essence) is to be. By its essence, a specific “thing” is what it is (the essence of a house makes a home a home, not a garden, for example). When one asks what makes a triangle a triangle, I reply with three sides and three angles make a triangle a triangle; these features constitute the essence of the triangle. In relation to the material from which this or that “object” is made, the “design” is its form—that is, what shapes the material (this is why every being is composed of matter and form). In addition, there are laws in the drafting of a thing that exists: these are foremostly the so-called first “principles of being” (identity, non-contradiction, finality, etc.). “Design” also includes the properties of things and the relationships that some things form with other things²⁰. For example, between the numbers five and eight there is a numerical relationship, and between a man and a woman, for example, there is a marital relationship.

It should be emphasized that everything that makes up the “design” of a thing comes from the intellect; the detailed design exists first in the intellect—only then is it put into practice, and with the existence of a thing, it constitutes its “basic structure”. This basic

¹⁸ Cf. Arystoteles, *Metafizyka*, p. 123.

¹⁹ Cf. *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 2.

²⁰ Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Racjonalność i celowość świata osób i rzeczy*, pp. 75-76.

structure makes it possible to know “things” as they are in truth. Due to the fact that the “design”, an intellect has inscribed its essence into a thing, and any other intellect that recognizes the “thing” and wants to understand it and use it correctly, must “read” what the “thing” is. Thus, the entity must know the “design” that is contained in the “thing”.

Note that what comes from the intellect, which is “truth” itself, is appropriate for the intellect. One intellect establishes “truth” also so that another intellect can know it²¹. Therefore, it is worth looking at the world as a “book” that can be “read” and thereby discern within it the “truth” written by other intellects, including God. In this world, all things realize the modes of existence that were given to them according to the intention of their makers (or, I assert, the Creator). Thanks to nature of “things”, those who discover their rights, properties, relationships, etc., are improved. This kind of content develops, enriches, and improves the intellect that assimilates them.

Furthermore, metaphysical truth is a “property” of being itself. Due to the fact that God is also a kind of “being” (His essence is existence²²), He is also “truth” in a metaphysical sense. That is, the “truth” about the essence of God, determines what God is. Moreover, He is the first (uncreated, eternal) “truth”, which means that God’s design did not exist either before or outside of him. The metaphysical truth about God is also characterized by the fact that it is primarily knowable; indeed, God is knowable first of all for himself, and then for other entities equipped with intellectual cognition²³.

Everything that is made up of a “thing” (i.e., its essence, rights and properties) is its “truth” in a metaphysical sense. Since every existing “being” is unique and carries out a specific idea, it contains its own “truth”. This principle also applies to God in that the whole world is permeated with the thoughts of both God and persons. Because of this, the world is rational: it is from the intellect (thoughtful) and for the intellect (assimilable); it is a world of meaning, not absurdity²⁴.

2. God and goodness

“Goodness”, like truth, can be considered in several aspects. One of them concerns, for example, what may proceed from it; in this case, then, one deals with “goodness” in the

²¹ Cf. *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 2.

²² Cf. STh 1, q. 3, a. 4; M. A. Krąpiec, *Byt i istota. Św. Tomasza „De ente et essentia” – przekład i komentarz*, Lublin 2001, pp. 145-146.

²³ Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *O poznaniu Boga*, trans. P. Lichacz, Kraków 2005, pp. 93-95.

²⁴ Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Racjonalność i celowość świata osób i rzeczy*, pp. 69-70.

moral sense. Another aspect of “goodness” is related to the “quality” of being that is in turn related to the will of that “being”. Thus, it is legitimate to consider the concept of goodness both from the point of view of metaphysics and morality²⁵.

From our daily experience, we regularly think that what “serves” us as “useful” is itself, “good”. In this way, we treat the “good” interchangeably with what is “useful”, pleasant and right. In this sense, the “good” is limited to the practical dimension; what, then, has no practical value, hardly appears as “good”. However, it should be remembered that “goodness” also has a theoretical dimension. In this theoretical understanding, the “good” is used to achieve a specific goal, and “goodness” is a property of being for which the desire takes place. The terms “to be good” (for somebody) and “goodness” (good in itself) are not the same thing²⁶.

The history of human thought knows several concepts of the “good”, or “goodness”. The most powerful one is that formulated by Aristotle. In his view, “goodness” is the object of desire (wanting); “goodness” is what everyone wants—in other words the “good” is the goal of all striving²⁷. Whatever, therefore, is desired is “good”. In this way, “goodness” is not limited to practical objects, but includes all “beings”, as long as they are the object of desire. Thus, we can name any “being” that is wanted as “good”—e.g., a book, home, vacation, education, love, forgiveness, etc. These examples show that the “good” is not something different from “being”, but is the manner of its existence²⁸.

Can God also be included among the various kinds of beings that are wished for as “goodness”? Is God himself “good”? To answer this question, it is requisite to ask another question: does everyone “want” God? I admit that probably everyone could name a person that they know that does not “want” God, and that for a variety of reasons. On the basis of such a probe, it could be concluded that God is not “good”. But let’s look at this problem from a different angle.

²⁵ Cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *U podstaw rozumienia kultury*, Lublin 1991, pp. 66-77.

²⁶ Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa contra gentiles*, pp. 111-112.

²⁷ Cf. Arystoteles, *Etyka nikomachejska*, trans. D. Gromska, Warszawa 2012, p. 77; STh I, q. 6, a. 1; A. Maryniarczyk, *Bonum sequitur esse rei*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru, O pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, trans. A. Biątek, Lublin 2010, pp. 185-198; M. Sieńkowski, *Koncepcja woli a rozumienie wiary. Ujęcie realistyczne, aprioryczne i pozytywistyczne*, „Studia Etckie” 21(2019), no. 3, pp. 363-384.

²⁸ Cf. STh 1, q. 4, a. 1; A. Maryniarczyk, *Dobro bytu*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru, O pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, p. 214; M. M. Wright, *The Transcendence of Love According to St. Thomas Aquinas*, „Studia Etckie” 22(2020), no. 4, p. 500.

There is no doubt that everyone wants “perfection”²⁹. After all, this is synonymous with becoming “better” and more efficient, with reaching a higher level, or the maximalization of possibilities—that is, with “maturity” or development. It can be said that perfection in this sense is the “fullness” of oneself. However, this kind of “fullness” is not necessarily achieved with a long-term “goal” analogous to that which an athlete sets for themselves to break a record in their sport. The point is that one’s own “fullness” does not have to be invented (dreamed up), because it is already conceived. The “author” of this thought is not the person him or herself, but God instead.

St. Thomas Aquinas explains that to achieve “wholeness”, or “perfection”, is to become similar to primal cause of causes³⁰. After all, does not the “creator” of any “work” create “works” similar to himself? By virtue of this dependence, the effect tends to become what its creator is him or herself. If the “effect” reflects its creator, it means that the creator is desired by it. And what is desired is “goodness” itself³¹. Since God is the creator of everything, everything desires him as its “perfection”. So then, God himself is “good”³².

Whoever does not consider God as good has not yet recognized Him as the cause of all being (including the cause of him or herself). Objectively speaking, God is a “good” whether we accept it or not. However, one of the reasons that we do not identify God with “goodness” is that in our reflection on reality we do not yet reach the ultimate cause of “being”. This kind of reflection—and thereby the “way” of “seeing” (or reading) the world—is possible thanks to philosophy, especially “metaphysics”. On this basis, God appears as “good”, because he (“God”) is to his fullness every kind of existence, and most of all, personhood itself.

3. God and beauty

Many things that we have contact with in everyday life can “delight” us with its charm and beauty. We like not only beautiful views, faces and novels, but also captivating works of art, and even the noble attitudes and behavior of some people. This variety of beauty proves

²⁹ Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa contra gentiles*, p. 109.

³⁰ Cf. STh I, q. 6, a. 1.

³¹ Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru*, in: same, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru, O pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, pp. 18-19; M. A. Krąpiec, *Byt a dobro*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru, O pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, p. 202.

³² Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, in: same, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru, O pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, pp. 87-88. In addition, it should be noted that God is the highest good. Cf. STh I, q. 6, a. 2; M. Sieńkowski, *Koncepcja dobra najwyższego w ujęciu Tomasza z Akwinu i Immanuela Kanta*, „Nurt SVD” 145(2019), no. 1, pp. 236-252.

that it has many dimensions: aesthetic, ethical, theological, and philosophical³³. Let us pay attention to the last one, i.e. its philosophical sense (unfortunately often overlooked), because thanks to it we learn what “beauty” is in itself, and we also understand what God’s “beauty” is.

The word “beautiful” as used in the phrase “beautiful picture” or “beautiful sunset” is not the same as “beauty itself”. Used in the previous senses, it is the term for something else, and this is about beauty as beauty. There is an adjectival usage of “beauty”, as well as a noun usage of “beauty”. To be beautiful is “beauty” to someone, and to be “beautiful” is beauty in itself. This latter expression applies to the subjective dimension of beauty, and the former to the objective one. So what makes beauty “beauty”? Why are we “delighted” with it? How do things “enchant” us (that is, “attract” or “charm” us)? We find answers to these questions primarily in the field of philosophy.

Among the many philosophical definitions of beauty, the one given by St. Thomas Aquinas plays an important role, which contends that beauty is what “pleases” when it is “seen”³⁴. This definition contains two important elements that make up the essence of “beauty” itself: one of them is on the side of the subject that perceives a thing that is “seen”, and the other indicates the “property” of things that arouses a “liking”. Thus, beauty combines two dimensions: subjective and objective. Thanks to these two dimensions, it is possible to formulate a “relational” theory of beauty. According to this “relational” theory of beauty, the relation of the intellect and the will of a person to the “thing” is the basis of “beauty” in philosophical terms; “beauty” itself is constituted by the subject’s ability to contemplate a “thing” and the ability of a “thing” to impress the subject³⁵.

To see a “thing” as “beautiful” is not only to perceive it with your senses and to desire it with your feelings, but above all to use your intellect and will. The beauty of a thing understood in this way engages the intellect, which knows it (“reads” the truth about it), and the will which, by an act of wanting (liking), wants this thing (“reads” good about it). The activity of intellect and will causes a person to be “charmed” by a thing that presents itself as both intelligible and amiable. So then, the “thing” is not only recognizable, but also lovable. To admire a “thing” and its “beauty” consists of seeing its truth and goodness. Moreover,

³³ Cf. W. Tatariewicz, *Dzieje szczęściu pojęć*, Warszawa 1982, p. 179; P. Jaroszyński, *Beauty in the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, „Studia Gilsoniana” 7(2018), no. 4, pp. 579-595; R. Chałupniak, *Fides ex visu we współczesnej teologii piękna*, „Colloquia Theologica Ottoniana” 2014, no. 1, p. 152.

³⁴ Cf. STh 1, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1.

³⁵ Cf. J. C. Riofrío Martínez-Villalba, *The Effects of Beauty and the Redemption of the Ugly*, „Studia Gilsoniana” 8(2019), no. 2, pp. 406-407.

truth corresponds to the intellect, and good corresponds to the will, which is why “beauty” is said to be a “synthesis” of truth and good—things are not only meant to be known or loved (as two separate and independent human acts), but also to be “contemplated”: such an approach involves ever-deeper knowledge and ever-greater love³⁶.

In “realist” philosophy, beauty is understood as the “universal” (or transcendental) property of an entity. Further, since every existing being has this “property”, every existent being is “beautiful”. However, it is only possible to perceive the “beauty” of things in a personal life, which consists of intellect and will. The action of these two aspects is combined into a single experience called “contemplation”³⁷. So then, “beauty” is the way things exist. Accordingly, things are objects of contemplation and evoke cognitive acts as well as acts of love.

Like every other “thing”, God can also be grasped by the act of contemplation. After all, a relationship with God is established mainly through the intellect and the will of the one who is seeking him. These two aspects make it possible to know and love God. Since God is a kind of “being”, one might think that beauty is one of his “properties”. However, because there is nothing in God that is not his essence, that beauty is not “his”, per se, but he himself instead³⁸.

On the other hand, God is the Creator of the things (of the world) that we say are “beautiful”. People only “read” the beauty of being, but God is its Creator by virtue of assigning it to a person’s intellect and will. The reason for the “beautiful” nature of created beings, then, is that they are derived from the intellect and will of the creator, who himself is “beautiful”. Since “being” is irreducibly related to God, it is permeated with his intellect and will³⁹. It is moreover, integrated, harmonious, and perfect, which is the “essence” of beauty. Only in this way does a “being” realize a specific intention (truth) and goal (good) given to it by God.

³⁶ Cf. STh 1-2, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3; M. A. Krąpiec, *Metafizyka. Zarys teorii bytu*, pp. 212-213.

³⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 211-212.

³⁸ Cf. STh 1, q. 3, a. 6; Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa contra gentiles*, p. 161.

³⁹ Cf. P. Jaroszyński, *Spór o piękno*, Poznań 1992, p. 26; K. Klauza, *Piękno*, in: *Przewodnik po filozofii religii. Nurt analityczny*, ed. J. Salamon, Kraków 2016, p. 191.

Conclusion

The metaphysical cognition of reality (cf. Aristotle, Aquinas) leads to the assertion that properties that belong to beings are able to be noticed by those same “beings”⁴⁰. This group of “properties” includes relational transcendence in the form of truth, goodness and beauty. Hence, truth, goodness, and beauty are bestowed upon everything that “really” exists. These properties are distinguishable by assigning “being” to the mental faculties of a person—that is, the intellect and the will. This type of relationship is also true of God, which means that God is truth, goodness, and beauty.

The semantic analysis of transcendental concepts (cf. M. A. Krąpiec, A. Maryniarczyk) proves that things are connected by the intellect and the will of a “being”. As a result, “beings” serve not only to know and love independently of one another, but also to “contemplate”—that is, to perceive their truth and “goodness” simultaneously and unitedly. Such an approach to these aspects of “being” brings to light the truth, goodness, and beauty of things. It also means that beings are “perfect” by their nature, not because they are not imperfect. Moreover, God is not only truth, goodness and beauty, but also their source and model. Metaphysical reflections prove that these properties are expressed in different ways (analogously) in the world “created” by God. In addition, this metaphysical reflection serves to explain and help us “beings” understand what the revelational aspects of the bible teaches about God as “truth”, “goodness”, and “beauty”.

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⁴⁰ Cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Transcendentalia i uniwersalia. Próba ustalenia ich znaczeń*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O prawdzie*, p. 163.

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God and Truth, Goodness, and Beauty Summary

The purpose of this article is to present the meaning of the transcendental properties, which include truth, goodness, and beauty, among others. Their understanding was developed by philosophers of the classical trend (in the past and today). On the basis of metaphysics, it is explained that every real being has these properties. The author of this study shows that they also belong to God.

Keywords: God, transcendental, being, truth, good, beauty, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, Andrzej Maryniarczyk