

THE GOOD AS *TELOS* IN CAJETAN, BANEZ AND ZUMEL

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In the *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 5, art. 4, Thomas argues that the good has the *ratio* of the final cause.¹ This thesis is problematic because there seems to be a difference between the definitions and uses of “good” and “final cause.” If Thomas is arguing that the good and the final cause are in no way distinct, then why might we plausibly describe something as good even if it has no causal role? If not, then what does it mean for the *ratio* of goodness to be the same as that of final causality? Later Thomists disagree over the precise relationship between goodness and final causality, and their disagreement is reflected in their different interpretations of the argument and conclusion of this text. Few hold that Thomas merely means to say that goodness is the fundament of being an end, or that being an end is something like a proper passion of goodness. But they disagree over what the additional connection between the two might be.

Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469-1534) provides an influential but confusing account of this article. According to Cajetan, in this text Thomas is not only arguing that the good is the fundament of the final cause, but also for the stronger thesis that the good is the *ratio* of the final cause *in actu exercito*. What does Cajetan himself mean by this? Later writers such as the Dominican Domingo Banez (1528-1604) and the Mercedarian Francisco Zumel (d. 1607) note that Cajetan makes this point obscurely.² They provide

¹This text and Thomas de Vio Cajetan’s commentary can be found in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter *ST*), in *Opera omnia* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1884-), vol. 4, 61-62. Unless otherwise indicated, all texts from Thomas Aquinas are cited from this edition.

²Domingo Banez, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4, in *Ibid.*, *Scholastica Commentaria in Primam Partem Summae Theologiae S. Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. Luis Urbano (Madrid: Editorial F.E.D.A., 1934), 186; Francisco Zumel, *In I-II*, q. 5, art. 4, in *Ibid.*, *Commentaria in Primam Partem Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, Vol. 1 (Salamanca: Ioannes Ferdinandus, 1585), 139. See also Francisco Suarez, *In I-II*, tract. 1, dispt. 1, sect. 3, n. 2, in *Ibid.*,

a more detailed account of Cajetan's reading and then provide their own alternative accounts. There are consequently several issues that surround the disagreement over this article of the *Summa Theologiae*, such as the correct interpretation of Cajetan, the correct reading of Thomas Aquinas, and the truth of the different ways of accounting for the relationship between the *ratio* of the good and final causality. I will show that this controversy sheds some light on this last philosophical issue, and also has some interest for the history of Thomism.

Thomas de Vio Cajetan: The Good Is Not Only a Fundament of the Final Cause

In this text from the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas clearly is arguing for more than a material identity between the final cause and the good. As both Banez and Zumel note, in the *ad 1* of the article Thomas states that the identity between the good and the final cause is greater than that between the beautiful and the good. But the beautiful and the good are materially identical. Consequently, the good and the end must be connected on account of their *rationes*.

Although Thomas' account of the good has a variety of historical sources, he closely follows Aristotle's account of how the good is an end. Thomas thinks that an end is desirable because or perhaps insofar as it is good. Thomists often cite Thomas' *In Metaphysicorum*, lib. 2, lect. 4, in which Thomas states:

Now, with the final cause having been removed, so is the nature and *ratio* of the good removed, for the *ratio* of the good and the end is the same: for the good is what all desire, as is said in Book I of the *Ethics*.³

Opera Omnia, Vol. 4 (Paris: Vives, 1856), 6: "*Hanc autem veritatem per se claram, obscuriorem reddit Cajetanus . . .*"

³"*Remota autem causa finali, removetur natura et ratio boni: eadem enim ratio boni et finis est; nam bonum est quod omnia appetunt, ut dicitur in primo Ethicorum.*" Thomas, *In Metaphysicorum*, lib. 2, lect. 4, n. 317, in *In Duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis*. 2nd ed., ed. M-R. Cathala and Raymond Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1971), 89. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1.1094a2-3. For various early modern accounts of this issue, including those of Cajetan and Banez, see Jean-Luc Solère, "Une passion de l'être. Les discussions sur le bien transcendantal dans les commentaires de la *Somme théologique* I, q. 5, a. 1 à la Renaissance," in B. Pinchard, ed., *Fine Follie ou la catastrophe humaniste. Etude sur les transcendants à la Renaissance* (Paris: Champion, 1995), 33-52.

Thomas never states that the end and the good share the same definition. In his commentary on this passage from Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Thomas denies that desirability is even part of the good's essential definition.⁴ Desirability is an effect of goodness. Consequently, "what all desire" is only an *a posteriori* definition of the good, since this being desired is its proper effect. Desirability somehow follows on goodness and is not itself constitutive of goodness. Consequently, being an end or object of desire seems in some way to follow upon being good.

Although the formal notion of goodness may entail desirability, it involves something different from or perhaps just in addition to desirability. Thomas in this commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in many of his other works states that the good is desired because it is perfective.⁵ According to this account, perfection explains and is consequently prior to desirability. Something is an end because it is a perfection. According to this interpretation, it might seem that the *ratio* of the good entails the end but does not by itself include a reference to the end.

In other passages, Thomas implies that to be an end is part of what it means to be good. For instance, in *De Veritate*, q. 21, art. 1, Thomas states that a relation to the end must be included in the definition of goodness.⁶ Moreover, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Thomas states that "the good insofar as it is good is an end," which could mean not only that the end depends upon the notion of the good, but that being good depends on being an end.⁷ How should we interpret such statements? Francis Sylvester of Ferrara (1472-1528) interprets this passage from the *Summa Contra Gentiles* as stating that the end is more than merely materially identical with the good, but not as stating that they are in any way formally identical.⁸ According to Francis Sylvester, in this passage Thomas indicates that the good is the fundament of the end, and that the end is like a proper passion that follows from the good. In this way Francis Sylvester preserves a formal connection between the two notions without arguing for an identical *ratio*,

⁴Thomas, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* (hereafter *SLE*), lib. 1, lect. 1 (Leonine ed., vol. 47.1, 5).

⁵Thomas, *SLE*, lib. 1, lect. 1 (Leonine ed., vol. 47.1, 5-6). See Thomas, *De Veritate*, q. 21, art. 2, resp. (Leonine ed., vol. 22.3, 596); *ST*, q. 5, art. 1 and 3.

⁶Thomas, *De Veritate*, q. 21, art. 1, resp. (Leonine ed., vol. 22.3, 594).

⁷"*bonum in quantum bonum sit finis.*" Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (hereafter *SCG*), 3.17 (Leonine ed., vol. 14, 40).

⁸See also Francis Sylvester of Ferrara, *In SCG* 1.37, nn. 2-4, in Thomas, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine ed., vol. 13, 112-113).

and argues that this text is in agreement with passages in which Thomas states that the notion of the good as perfective is prior to its desirability.

Cajetan also states that the good is the fundament of the end in his commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*. But he also thinks that there is more at stake in the title of the article, “whether the good has the *ratio* of a final cause.” According to Cajetan, there are two ways of understanding the “*ratio*” in this question, namely *in actu signato* and *in actu exercito*. Consequently, Thomas’ conclusion about their identity can also be understood correctly in both the weaker sense that it is the fundament of the end and in some stronger sense.

Cajetan’s understanding of these different senses is somewhat obscurely indicated by the distinction between *in actu signato* and *in actu exercito*, which itself is used by late scholastic writers in different contexts. It is best to try to understand the meaning here by looking at Cajetan’s particular account. In this context, to assert that the good has the *ratio* of a final cause *in actu signato* would simply be to assert that it is the proximate fundament of the *ratio* of a final cause. Consequently, Cajetan states that if the *ratio* is understood *in actu signato*, the question posed by the article would mean “Whether a thing, by the fact that it is good, demands this proper to itself that it be ‘for the sake of which.’”⁹ However, if the assertion is understood *in actu exercito*, the article’s question would mean “Whether the good formally is formally that *ratio* of the end *in actu exercito*, that is, it might exercise the final causality.”¹⁰ In this second sense the good is not merely the fundament of the end, but the good itself in some way acts as an end.

Cajetan thinks that Thomas’s conclusion is affirmative according to both interpretations. The first, that it is a fundament, is more obvious, and we have seen that Francis Sylvester discusses the issue in this context. But Cajetan thinks that the second question is what is at stake in this article of the *Summa*, both because of the way in which the response is argued and because it is formal and worthy.¹¹ He seems to think that there would not need to be much of an argument for the position that the good is a fundament. Thomas’s point is stronger, namely that the good itself exercises final causality. But what does Cajetan mean by this thesis?

⁹“*An res, eo quia bonum, vindicet sibi hoc proprium, quod sit ‘cuius gratia.’*” Cajetan, *In ST I*, q. 5, art. 4, n. 1, in Thomas, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine ed., vol. 4, 61).

¹⁰“*Utrum bonum formaliter sit formaliter ipsa ratio finis in actu exercito, idest exerceat causalitatem finalem.*” *Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*, 62.

Francisco Zumel and Dominic Banez: The Good and the Final Cause Have Distinct Definitions

Zumel and the Banez provided roughly the same account and criticism of Cajetan's thesis. Their commentaries on this article of the *Summa Theologiae* concerning the *rationes* of the good and of the end are doctrinally and to some extent even verbally similar. Banez published this part of his commentary in 1584, when he was the first chair of theology at the University of Salamanca. Zumel, who held various positions in philosophy at the same University, published this part of his commentary in 1585. Zumel's commentary is lengthier and provides examples. In my presentation of their view I will follow Banez more carefully but use Zumel's text to illustrate some points.

Both Banez and Zumel think that Cajetan's distinction between *in actu signato* and *in actu exercito* is obscure in this context, but draws attention to two different ways of thinking about the *ratio* of the cause, namely as the definition of the cause as causing, and as the principle of causation. In the first sense, the *ratio* of the cause is simply what it means to be a kind of cause. For instance, the *ratio* of the efficient cause in this sense is "that from which motion really begins."¹² Zumel provides an example of the action of heating. In this first sense, the *ratio* of that which heats is the very definition of the efficient cause of the heating itself, which intrinsically contains an order to both the act of heating and that which is heated. According to both Banez and Zumel, Cajetan describes this *ratio* of a cause as the *ratio in actu exercito*. It is the *ratio* of the cause in action. In this sense, the *ratio* of a final cause is "that for the sake of which."¹³

In another sense, the *ratio* of the cause is the principle of action. For instance, in efficient causality the *ratio* can be considered to be the form through which the efficient cause is in act. Zumel uses the same example of heating to illustrate the application of this usage to efficient causality. In this sense, the *ratio* of that which heats is the form through which it heats, namely the form of fire. Fire is the principle by which that which heats can heat. Although the form of fire is the form by which it heats, this form can be understood apart from the exercise of or order to efficient causality. In

¹²"*unde incipit motus realiter.*" Banez, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. Urbano, 186). "*unde incipit motus realiter et proprie.*" Zumel, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. 1585, 139).

¹³"*id cuius gratia aliquid fit.*" Banez, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. Urbano, 186); Zumel, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. 1585, 139).

this sense the *ratio* of any final cause is goodness. Consequently, even though all final causality has goodness as its principle, this goodness can be understood apart from any intrinsic order to a final cause. For instance, we understand that God would be good even if there were no creature to desire him by a rational or by a natural appetite. According to Banez and Zumel, Cajetan describes this *ratio* of the cause with *in actu signato*.

In what way do they criticize Cajetan? All three thinkers – Cajetan, Banez, and Zumel – are verbally in agreement over Thomas’s first conclusion, which Cajetan presents as “the good has the *ratio* of an end.”¹⁴ Banez and Zumel replace “has” with “signifies” (*dicit*), but this change is unimportant.¹⁵ The real disagreement is over what the word “*ratio*” might mean in this context. Cajetan thinks this conclusion is about the *ratio* of the cause *in actu exercito*, although it is also true of the *ratio* of the cause *in actu signato*. He seems to be stating that the good simply as good exercises final causality. Banez and Zumel think that the conclusion is correct of the *ratio* of the cause only in the *actu signato*. They deny Cajetan’s stronger thesis concerning the *rationes in actu exercito*, since they think it would mean that the good and the final cause would share the same definition. Zumel writes:

We should say that St. Thomas in the first conclusion should be understood with respect to the *ratio* in the second way [as a principle], without doubt by which the good is a principle and a form, from which the end is able to act as an end, or to move the agent to its own operation. And in this sense the conclusion is laid bare. For the proximate *ratio* and form, from which the thing is able to move as a final cause, is goodness; but it is not the case that the definitions of both, namely of goodness and of the end, are the same. Therefore St. Thomas speaks in the first conclusion, according to Cajetan, concerning the *ratio* of the end in the second way, which can be called the *ratio* of the end *in actu signato*.¹⁶

¹⁴“*Bonum habet rationem causae finalis.*” Cajetan, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4, n. 3 (Leonine ed., vol. 4, 62);

¹⁵Banez, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. Urbano, 186); Zumel, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. 1585, 138).

¹⁶“*dicamus quod Sanctus Thomas intelligendus est in prima conclusio de ratione secundo modo, nempe quo bonum est principium et forma, unde finis habet finalizare, sive movere ipsum agens ad sui operationem. Et in isto sensu conclusio est aperta. Nam proxima ratio et forma, unde res habet ut moveat finaliter, est bonitas: non tamen definitiones utriusque; scilicet bonitatis et finis sunt eadem. Loquitur ergo Sanctus Thomas in priori conclusio iuxta Caietanum de ratione finis secundo modo, quae potest dici ratio finis in actu signato.*” Zumel, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. 1585, 139-140).

Against Cajetan, Zumel and Banez argue Thomas's own discussion is about the *ratio* of the cause considered as the principle, or what Cajetan calls *in actu signato*. They think that goodness is not the *ratio* of the cause in what they take to be Cajetan's understanding of *in actu exercito*, since the *ratio* of the good can be understood apart from final causality. On their account, Cajetan blurs or even collapses the distinction between the *rationes* of the good and of the end.

Banez and Zumel provide a convincing reading of Thomas's text. It seems somewhat closer to Francis Sylvester's account of the similar text in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, according to which the good is the fundament of the end, and the end follows its *ratio* in the way that a proper passion does. It follows from the *ratio* without itself being part of the *ratio*. In contrast, according to Banez and Zumel, Cajetan seems to be arguing that the good itself is even in definition the same as the end.

The Emerging Thomistic Synthesis

Apart from the issue of whether Banez and Zumel correctly interpret Thomas, we might also ask whether Cajetan really intends to say that the good and the end share the same definition, or perhaps part of the same definition. Both Banez and Zumel admit that in their opinion Cajetan is speaking obscurely. Moreover, they think that he speaks differently in other texts. Their admission of this obscurity and their interpretation of Cajetan as inconsistent should perhaps motivate us to find a clearer and more consistent interpretation of Cajetan himself. In 1613, the Italian Dominican Gabriel Nazarius (1556-1645) said that Banez simply does not understand what Cajetan is saying. According to Nazarius, Cajetan mentions the *ratio* of the end *in actu exercito* merely to note that the good "might exercise final causality, that is in act to finalize, which is in act to terminate the act of an appetite."¹⁷ According to this interpretation, Cajetan's view seems somewhat benign and uncontroversial. Nazarius does seem to think that there is a real discrepancy between Banez and Cajetan. On Nazarius's reading, the controversy is altogether unimportant.

¹⁷"*idest exerceat causalitatem finalem, idest actu finalizet, quod est actu terminare actum appetitus.*" Iohannes Paulus Nazarius, *In I*, q. 5, art. 4, in *Commentaria et Controversae in Primam Partem Summae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, vol. 1 (Venice: Variscus, 1613), 156-157.

However, in defense of Banez and Zumel's interpretation of Cajetan, it seems to me that Cajetan himself argues for a stronger and not altogether trivial thesis. For instance, he states that the good is more than merely a fundament of the end, which to some extent separates him from Francis Sylvester. There is a difference between the latter's position that the final cause is a kind of proper passion that flows from the good as its fundament and Cajetan's further position that the good as good exercises final causality. Cajetan seems to be pointing to some additional connection between the *rationes* of the good and of the final cause, even if it is not obvious what this connection is.

Some recognition of the distinctiveness of Cajetan's position can be found in the discussion of Banez' Dominican student Diego Alvarez (ca. 1550-1635). Interestingly, Alvarez does not follow Banez's account of Cajetan, but instead reframes the discussion as a dispute between Francis Sylvester and Cajetan. According to Alvarez, Francis Sylvester's description of the good as a fundament is the same as Cajetan's description of it as the *ratio* of the end *in actu signato*. Alvarez then defends what he sees as Cajetan's stronger identification of the good as the *ratio* of the end even if considered *in actu exercito*. He isolates the philosophical issue by showing how the explanation that the good is the fundament of the end is true but incomplete. It is unclear to me whether Alvarez is aware of something like Nazarius's criticism of Banez, or Nazarius's description of the dispute as relatively unimportant. Alvarez' account verbally resembles that of Nazarius when he states that Cajetan should be understood to say that the goodness of the end is the formal *ratio* "on account of which the end attracts the will and terminates the inclination of an appetite."¹⁸ Unlike Nazarius, Alvarez indicates that something further is at stake than the mere question of whether the good is the fundament of the end. But this further issue as Alvarez describes it differs from that discussed by Banez and Zumel.

As far as I can tell, later prominent Thomists do not after this point continue to discuss Cajetan's understanding of this article of the *Summa Theologiae*, although they do repeat many of the same arguments and use the same distinction between *in actu exercito* and *in actu signato*. Surprisingly, later in the seventeenth century, the Carmelites of Salamanca attribute more or less the same view to Cajetan, Francis of Sylvester, Nazarius, and Alvarez.

¹⁸Alvarez, "*propter quam finis attrahit voluntatem et terminat inclinationem appetitus.*" Diego Alvarez, *In I-II*, q. 1, art. 1, disp. 1, n. 13, in *Disputationes Theologicae in Primam Secundae Summae Sancti Thomae*, vol. 1 (Trani: Vitale, 1617), 4.

On their account, there is no real difference between the different interpretations, and their views to me seem to incorporate the different views of their predecessors without much explanation. Moreover, they pass over Banez and Zumel, whom they often cite in other contexts. Nevertheless, in this passage the Carmelites emphasize the point made by Banez and Zumel that the good and the final cause have distinct definitions. The Carmelites state, “The good and the end are defined with formally diverse definitions, for the good is defined as ‘that which is perfective of the appetite in the way of suitability,’ but the end is ‘something for the sake of which,’ or ‘that which is desirable for its own sake, and other things for it’”¹⁹

The Carmelites also seem to appeal to their more recent predecessors discussing the distinction of the *in signato* and *in exercito* distinction. They do not mention Cajetan in this context, and themselves provide an account that resembles the readings of Cajetan by both Nazarius and Alvarez. According to the Carmelites, the *ratio* of the good *in signato* is abstract, and the *ratio* of the good *in exercito* is that of the good concretely instantiated and in act as a final cause. Considered *in actu signato*, the *ratio* of the good is the fundament of the final cause and separable from it. However, considered *in actu exercito*, which is concretely acting as an end, the *ratio* of the good includes an order to the end. In this way the *ratio* of the good includes the end even if the end is not part of its essential definition. The *ratio* of the good considered *in actu signato* is the fundament of the end. The *ratio* of the good considered *in actu exercito* includes an order to the end. They avoid both the position that the good and the end are formally identical as well as the position that the good is merely the fundament of the end.

The Carmelites explain the distinction more clearly than their predecessors. For example, they compare the relationship of the good to the end to that between quantity and extension. *In actu signato*, quantity is a fundament of extension. *In actu exercito*, quantity is intrinsically and directly said to be extended. Similarly, *in actu signato*, the good is the fundament of the end, but *in actu exercito* it is formally denominated an end. Their view seems to take into account previous positions without being vulnerable to obvious

¹⁹“*bonum, et finis, diffiniuntur diversis formaliter diffinitionibus: bonum enim diffinitur, ‘quod est perfectivum appetitus per modum convenientis,’; finis autem ‘cujus gratia aliquid fit,’ aut ‘qui est appetibilis propter se, et alia propter ipsum . . .’*” Salmanticenses, *Cursus Theologicus*, tract. 8, disp. 1, dub. 2, n. 23, in *Cursus Theologicus Summam Theologicum Angelici Doctoris D. Thomae Complectens*, vol. 5 (Paris: Palme, 1878), 16.

criticisms. It might be tempting to ascribe this position to Cajetan or even to Thomas himself. But such an attribution would be perhaps anachronistic, since they did not so clearly formulate the issue.

Whether or not their interpretations are historically accurate, the Carmelites and to some extent Alvarez eventually settled on an account of the *ratio in actu exercito* which is immune from the criticisms of Banez and Zumel. According to this interpretation, the *ratio* of the good considered abstractly is distinct from the *ratio* of the end, even though the good considered concretely as a final cause contains some formal connection to this end. The history of this controversy might shed some light on the way in which later Italian and Spanish Thomists incorporated the discussions of earlier Thomists, and in particular Cajetan. I have elsewhere argued that Alvarez and another Thomist reinterpreted Cajetan on the causation of sin in order to defend him from the criticisms of Banez and others.²⁰ Perhaps we see here another instance of such a reinterpretation of Cajetan. Or perhaps the explanation is simpler. Cajetan's distinction might be obscure to such an extent that it has merely the value of helping later Thomists to more precisely understand the way in which the good is the *ratio* of the end.²¹

²⁰Thomas M. Osborne Jr., "How Sin Escapes Premotion: The Development of Thomas Aquinas's Thought by Spanish Thomists," in Steven A. Long, Roger W. Nutt, and Thomas Joseph White, *Thomism and Predestination: Principles and Disputations* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2016), 192-213.

²¹Special thanks to Rose Grimes.