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**TO SEE A CITY
COME INTO BEING IN SPEECH:
GENUS AND ANALOGY IN PLATO’S *REPUBLIC***

With an understanding of St. Thomas’s teaching on virtual quantity and analogy, ‘to see a city come into being’ is to see a philosophical genus come into being. A proper understanding of a philosophical genus needs a proper understanding of both virtual quantity and analogy. A penetrating understanding of each, moreover, combined with an attentive reading of Book II of Plato’s *Republic*, affords to students of Aquinas a fruitful consonance between such an understanding and Christian metaphysics.

The arguments presented in this paper are based on a two-volume work on metaphysics, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*¹ by Peter A. Redpath—a renowned author, recognized for his commitment to facilitate the understanding of St. Thomas’s teaching.²

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¹ I mean here Peter A. Redpath’s *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics: Written in the Hope of Ending the Centuries-old Separation between Philosophy and Science and Science and Wisdom*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: En Route, 2015), and *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics: An Introduction to Ragamuffin Thomism*, vol. 2 (St. Louis: En Route, 2016).

² See Robert A. Delfino, “Redpath on the Nature of Philosophy,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 5:1 (January–March 2016): 33–53; and Curtis L. Hancock, “Peter Redpath’s Philosophy of History,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 5:1 (January–March 2016): 55–93.

This paper consists of three sections. Because (1) the subject of all philosophy consists of one genus and a psychological habit, and because (2) the language of philosophy is analogy, (3) *The Republic* displays both philosophical genera and philosophical language in such a way that, by it, students of St. Thomas Aquinas are better equipped to observe the relation between real beings and are more properly oriented toward reality.

One Genus and a Psychological Habit: The Subject of All Philosophy

Many students of philosophy would be at a loss for words if asked to explain the subject of philosophy. This is partly because the modern understanding of a philosophical genus is no richer than what middle-school biology class affords, and partly because philosophy is mistakenly thought to be a body of knowledge or a logical system instead of what it actually is: an act of a habit of the human soul.³

The popularity of reducing a genus to a classification term is the effect of many of us only ever having heard ‘genus’ used in the context of biological taxonomy. From broadest to most narrow is the hierarchy of living organisms classified: Domain, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, and Species. Genus is, as a taxonomic rank, the second most precise term used to identify a living thing, and it is because of the stupendous diversity of living organisms on our planet that knowledge of genera is useful for dividing families of living organisms into tidy groups; as for the smaller, tidier groups of living organisms—those are species.

Passionflowers in full bloom, for example, spill over the fences and trellises of gardens in the spring and summer months of tropical climates. These curious flowers attract bees and other living organisms.

³ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 1, 72.

Identifying the passionflower vine depends both upon who and where the question is asked because its many species bear region-specific, vernacular names. A definitive, ‘scientific name’ should come in handy, for few of us could tell this purple one apart from that purple one—and fewer still would bother with binomials in the first place—but in any case such a science of naming does exist. Equipped with a field guide and binomial nomenclature, an enthusiast can discern species of passionflower with precision. “See there: a specimen of *Passiflora incarnata*. It belongs to the genus *Passiflora* and to the species *incarnata*.”

Apart from biology class and horticulture walks, students of Latin know *genus* to mean, simply, ‘kind.’ The word refers to a kind of thing, but to nothing particular. And, while that could suggest a universal term or even an essence, it is the un-remarkableness of ‘the generic’ that accrues, unfortunately, the discreet, if not pejorative, meaning when, say, comparing the name-brand product to its store-brand alternative. Powdery oat-puff pellets ornamented by corn syrup marshmallows that dye the milk mauve, for example, constitute the generic brand of *Lucky Charms*; the generic does not appear especially interesting.

Yet even students of Aristotle run the risk of misunderstanding the nature of a genus. This is either an effect of having little exposure to the term itself beyond the above-mentioned contexts, or of taking as a guide—be it from a teacher or from secondary source material—the interpretive work of a logician, not a philosopher.

A hasty reading of the fifth chapter of Aristotle’s *Categories*, for instance, can—from the distinction Aristotle makes between primary and secondary substances⁴—support a misinterpretation of genera and species as no more than grouping terms. Because of the primacy Aristo-

⁴ Aristotle, “Categories,” 2a15, in Aristotle, *Introductory Readings*, translated, with introduction, notes, and glossary, by Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996), 3.

tle attaches to the individual substance and to his relegation of genera and species to ‘secondary’ substances, it is easy to conclude that primary substances are more real than secondary substances. Nor is it improbable to arrive at the conclusion that secondary substances exist only in the mind of a rational primary substance.

From such a hasty misreading of *Categories*, the case appears to be that ‘man’ is a species, ‘animal’ a genus, but ‘John Michael’ is not only more precise, he is more real because only he exists in the extramental world. Secondary substances signify ‘a kind of this,’ but who among us is capable of pointing to a ‘kind’ of anything? We can point to John Michael because he signifies ‘a *this*.’ The generic animal and the less generic man exist, but only in the mind of a John Michael.

Genus and species, under a superficial reading of Aristotle, are classification signs that allow for the arrangement of concrete things into abstract categories, which is similar to the utility of modern taxonomical classification signs. Secondary substance signs make sturdy tools for conceptualizing reality and for marking subject and predicate terms while syllogizing. Such is the equipment of the logician’s, not the philosopher’s, understanding of genus and species.

As Étienne Gilson notes, to say what genus and species are, both inside and outside the mind, is difficult.⁵ Enriched as it is by binomial nomenclature, the modern mind is bereft of the metaphysical equipment to go any further with genus and species; so they remain classification terms, greater or lesser in terms of precision at naming things.

The logician and philosopher differ in their understanding of genus and species. The philosopher does not, like the logician, completely

⁵ “It is very easy,” writes Étienne Gilson, “to say that the genus animal, or the species man, are existing both in the mind and outside the mind; the real difficulty is to know *what* they are in the mind: ideas, concepts, or names? And what they are outside the mind: subsisting ideas, forms, or mere aggregates of sensible qualities?” Étienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 8.

abstract from the way the subject-genus, which the philosophical habit of the soul studies, exists in reality. Rather, a philosopher studies only partly-abstracted essences—as natures, generating principles, wholes, and proximate causes. The logician studies ‘man-ness’ and ‘animal-ness’ which, considered as such, really do exist outside human faculties. A philosopher can take these and add ‘John Michael’ to validly and soundly syllogize the following: Man is an animal, and John Michael is a man, therefore John Michael is an animal. However, when the philosopher uses the term ‘genus,’ he or she is referring to the proximate subject in which *per se* accidents—quantity and quality—inhere. By ‘genus’ he or she means an organizational body and proper principle of many different species and their properties: something causal, something that universally establishes a relationship between a numerically-one cause and its effects.⁶

When talking about a genus, a philosopher refers to a principle that unifies a diverse multitude into parts of a whole. A genus is divided by opposites, by act and potency, for example; by form and matter; and by principles of unity and division. A genus includes a diverse array of species—hierarchically-ordered according to perfection—that are directed to an end. A genus helps define, and is, in part, defined by its end; and its species are the means for achieving that end. Genera are organizational principles, species operational. A genus is a generator of conductible acts, and its parts—the species—are the actor-operators, and of its actor-operators, a maximum actor-operator exists; species within a genus are unequally related to their end. Through its maximum species a genus communicates its common aim throughout its species—all the way down to its minimum species—in order to attain its end.⁷

⁶ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 34–43.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 34–39.

St. Thomas accounts for the division of genus into species, and the range of perfections among species, by the qualitative principle of virtual quantity.⁸ The matter of corporeal things has, of course, quantifiable properties; yet, according to St. Thomas, so, too, does form.⁹ In each thing, composite whole, a formal, intrinsic degree of perfection of greater or lesser intensity, exists. A thing is what it is by virtue of its form, but each form is more or less complete, according to its virtual quantity qualitative ability to possess and hold onto the act of existence (*esse*). In other words, *depending upon its degree of having*—itself borne from the contraries of privation and possession—a thing can be more or less perfectly what it already is.¹⁰ Consider, for example, an army. Obviously, almost innumerable differences exist between generals and privates, but the principle of virtual quantity would explain the much less obvious: the differences among generals and the differences among privates.

Genera are everywhere because reality is constituted by genera; and, for that reason, any number of ready-to-hand examples of genera exist. To pick one, let us consider the local, public school district in the United States. The common aim of the local school district is often ex-

⁸ Étienne Gilson unpacks St. Thomas's teaching on virtual quantity at *S.Th.* I, 13, 1 by clarifying, "There is no being except the Divine Being in whom all creatures participate, and the creatures differ from each other only by the greater or lesser dignity of the degree of participation realized by them. Their perfection therefore necessarily measures the distance which separates them from God, and they are necessarily differentiated by the hierarchical order in which they are placed." Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Edward Bullough (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing's Rare Reprints, 2003), 352. "[T]he perfection of the universe," writes Armand Maurer, "demands this diversity [of genera and species] and the inequality among beings resulting from it. Since no one creature adequately expresses the divine goodness, God produced a vast number of them and arranged them in a hierarchy of perfection, so that together they might form a whole, or a universe, fittingly representative of the divine goodness." Armand Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy: An Introduction* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982), 175.

⁹ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 1, 219–220.

¹⁰ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 99–101.

pressed in a mission statement, for example, “Our mission is to teach, challenge, and inspire our students to achieve success in the global community.” The properly qualified species in this genus are hierarchically ordered. The maximum species is the superintendent. Judged by his or her constituents to be the most qualified, he or she was selected to delegate tasks to the entire organization so that the mission statement might be realized. Nearest him or her are the board members. Nearest to them are the principals of the various schools, each of whom has assistant principals. Each of the assistant principals presides over a particular academic department, which, in turn, is represented by an academic team-leader or departmental chair. The chair works closest with teachers of advanced-placement classes, but represents the entire team from remedial and recovery-classroom teachers, to special-education and early-exit teachers. Each of *these*, in turn, works with one or another para-professional for this and that student with this and that accommodation. The students themselves, finally—without which the entire organization would be pointless—have fully-planned schedules, educational plans and goals, career-tracks and specialties.

On the coordinating front, none of this would be possible without counselors, who, in addition to filling out schedules and schedule changes, do *actual counseling work, too*, resolving conflicts and so on. Hundreds of administrative assistants exist, spread across dozens of individual schools. And no fewer custodial and maintenance staff exist. Each school has a food-service team, and every school is situated in one or another network of schools with regard to the transportation team. Each school has a resource officer, employed by the local police department and assigned to a particular campus. And support-staff also exist: security personnel. Athletic departments exist on every campus, from the single gym teachers at the elementary campuses, to the athletic directors and dozens of coaches at the high schools. Fine arts and music departments exist, each of which relies on booster clubs, many of which

are populated by parents also belonging to Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs), who inevitably bring in Community Partners to sponsor this and that event. And so on. Enumerating all the different species that are properly qualified to fit into this genus is perhaps an endless task. Nevertheless, the example is for displaying the characteristics of a philosophical genus. Clear examples of genus are found anywhere in day to day experience.

Undesirable consequences result from misunderstanding the nature of a philosophical genus. Besides a consequent misunderstanding of analogy, the more serious deficiency lies in misunderstanding *reality*. Genus, properly understood, is reality properly understood. Real genera and species are more than sterile terms for abstractly-considered essences of things. To reduce genera and species to taxonomic rankings is to reduce one's understanding of reality's nature.

Given that the sum total of reality is constituted by a multitude of overlapping genera, and that each genus is constituted by a multitude of species unequally related to its organizational aim, and that each species is properly qualified within its genus to carry out operations that differ in the order of perfection, it should be no surprise that philosophy—whose intellectual habit generates excellence in knowing a multitude of beings—should employ the language of analogy.

Analogy: The Language of Philosophy

Considered as a species of predication, analogy chiefly refers to an act of judgment, and it is the mode of reasoning proper to the philosopher.¹¹ Just as the philosophical genus cannot be reduced to terms or concepts fully abstracted from reality, neither can such a reduction be performed in the language of philosophy. To the extent that terms and

¹¹ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 1, 72.

concepts are employed to express judgments, analogy can be said to be related to terms and concepts, but only secondarily; analogy primarily refers to an act of judgment.¹² By the act of analogy the philosopher expresses judgments about some relationship between beings.

St. Thomas teaches us that words are signs of *ideas*, and that ideas are the similitude of *things*. The idea expressed by the name of the thing is the definition of that thing. The words that we use, when rightly used, “relate to the meaning of things signified through the medium of the intellectual conception” to the effect that “we can give a name to anything in as far as we can understand it.”¹³ We can name a cat ‘cat’ and a man ‘man,’ for example, because we understand the essences of these things in themselves; such an understanding is limited to creatures.

To predicate is to say of something that it is or that it is not. Arguments are composed of premises and conclusions, each of which is composed of subject and predicate terms. Predication refers to the way we talk about subjects insofar as the predicate term is that which is said of a subject. To predicate is, more fundamentally, to express a relationship between beings, not terms. The logician expresses a relationship between terms by applying this predicate term to that subject term. Through the use of judgment, the philosopher, when he or she predicates, expresses a relationship between two *beings*. Far beyond applying predicate terms to subject terms for the composition of premises to be arranged into syllogisms (an act which, in turn, requires additional tasks of arranging minor, major, and middle terms), the philosopher’s act of predication expresses how two beings are or are not one. Predication is a judgment about composition: the two beings either compose a one—a unity—or they do not. The philosopher’s act of predication ex-

¹² Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 50.

¹³ *S.Th.* I, 3, 1; and *ibid.*, 15, 1: “[B]y ideas are understood the forms of things, existing apart from the things themselves.”

presses a judgment about the way in which two beings are either united or divided—totally or partially.¹⁴

The usual place students of St. Thomas begin accounting for analogous predication is first to draw the distinction between univocity and equivocity so as to locate analogy in the middle way between the two. St. Thomas, in fact, invites us to such an understanding, though he expresses it as a judgment about the community between the idea of a thing and the thing to which it refers. Where the community between the idea of a thing and thing to which it refers is one and the same, the act of predication is univocal. Where a discrepancy exists between the idea of a thing and thing to which it refers because of a diversity of referents associated with the same word-sign, the community is purely equivocal: that is to say there is not community between the idea and thing. The middle way is in analogous predication, wherein “the idea is not, as it is in univocal, one and the same, yet it is not totally diverse as in equivocals; but a term which is thus used in a multiple sense signifies various proportions to some one thing.”¹⁵

Univocal predication is said to occur when the same term is applied to things that are generically the same, but specifically different, e.g. ‘fruit’ is rightly predicated of both apple and orange because they share a common genus. Equivocal predication is said to occur when the same term is applied to generically different things that do not have a common source, e.g. ‘bark’ of a tree differs from the ‘bark’ of a dog; as does ‘bank,’ a repository for money, from ‘bank,’ a mass of snow along a road; and ‘pitcher,’ the beverage receptacle, from ‘pitcher,’ the play-initiator in baseball.¹⁶

¹⁴ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 52.

¹⁵ *S.Th.* I, 13, 5.

¹⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Bk. IV, Lesson One, 535, trans. John P. Rowan (Chicago, 1961), ed. Joseph Kenny, O.P., accessed July 25, 2017, <http://dhsprory.org/thomas/english/Metaphysics.htm>.

Analogous predication, famously illustrated by students of St. Thomas in St. Thomas's famous example of 'health,' distributes the same generic meaning—health or healthy—to a multitude of subjects or species according to their unequal relations of possession and privation. That is, even though the predicated term has different subjects—each of which is unequally related to health—the term predicated retains its generic meaning, though the judgment itself is accordingly altered.¹⁷ Thus, health is legitimately predicated of humans, food, exercise, medicine, and urine. The meaning of 'this or that subject is healthy' in each case is altered insofar as unequal relationships to the healthy subject, i.e. the healthy human being, are implied: food, exercise and medicine can cause health, while urine can be a sign of health. The meaning of 'health' in each case is the same insofar as it implies reference to one and the same source: health in some individually-existing, living body.¹⁸

Aristotle's *Categories* offer a preparatory glimpse of the three modes of community between idea and thing that enrich our understanding of univocity, equivocity, and analogy. Bear in mind, even in Aristotle, the community is between word-signs that express relationships between ideas—the similitude of things—and things. He calls 'synonymous' things having both the name in common and the same account corresponding to the name of the essence. He calls 'homonymous' things having only a name in common, but the account of the essence corresponding to the name is different. 'Paronymous,' when things' names are derived from something else, but with a different inflection, for example, a grammarian from grammar; a brave man from bravery.¹⁹

¹⁷ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 53.

¹⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Bk. IV, Lesson One, 536.

¹⁹ Aristotle, "Categories," 1a1-15, in Aristotle, *Introductory Readings*, 1.

Predication is an act of signifying total or partial unity between a subject and what is said of it.²⁰ Aristotle indicates that things, such as ‘man,’ are said *of* a subject: that is, ‘man’ is said *of a subject*—an individual man—but is not *in any subject*. Then, things exist *in* a subject, but are *not said of any subject*. By ‘in a subject’ he means “what belongs *in* something, *not as a part*, and cannot exist separately from what it is in.” For example, an individual instance of grammatical knowledge is *in a subject*, the soul, but is not said of any subject; an individual instance of white is in a subject, the body (for all color is in some body), but is not said of any subject. And, then, some things are said *of* a subject *and are in* a subject; for example, knowledge is *in* a subject, the soul, and is said *of* a subject: for instance, grammatical knowledge.²¹ In each case, predication acts as a measure of the strength of unity possessed by a subject and what is said of it.²²

Analogous predication involves *per se* predication of a chief subject. The chief subject of predication is a *substance*. A substance, broadly speaking, is a matter-form composite: that which contains within it a *form* that generates substantial *acts*. So, since the form of health is chiefly *in* the healthy human being, the act of health is predicated *per se* of the human being.²³ The human being is the primary subject of which ‘health’ is said, or predicated.

Per se predication involves predication of a *primary subject* in which a form exists, and secondarily of other things as they are unequally causally related to it. The primary subject in the famous health example is in the physical body of a living human being. *Primary analogate* is another way to express the designation ‘primary subject.’ *Secondary analogates*, then, have to do with any of the other things that

²⁰ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 51.

²¹ Aristotle, “Categories,” 1a20-1b5, in Aristotle, *Introductory Readings*, 1–2.

²² Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 52.

²³ *Ibid.*, 53–54.

have some causal relationship to the primary analogate. Food, urine, medicine, and exercise are secondary analogates. The distinction between primary and secondary analogates corresponds to the three orders of analogy: (1) the subject, and according to (2) the efficient and (3) the final cause.²⁴

Analogical thinking is certainly comparative thinking, and it is useful to employ precise terms when expressing analogical judgments. It is helpful to use, for example, ‘analogate’ as a term for beings being compared in an analogy, and ‘analogon’ as a term for the basis of comparison. Also, though it comes with the risk of generating confusion, it may be useful to distinguish between types of analogy (for example, between analogy of attribution and analogy of proportion). The former, attributive mode of analogous thinking, some say, compares two or more beings that are related to each other on the basis of one of them literally possessing the analogon, the other(s) only figuratively; that is, the primary analogate literally possesses the analogon, the ‘secondary analogate(s)’ only figuratively relates to the analogon. This literal possession versus figurative possession²⁵ interpretation of the attributive mode of analogy is deserving of special scrutiny, and can be tested against Aristotle’s famous health example. Because the human subject literally possesses health, it would be left under this interpretation to attribute figurative possession to the secondary analogates of medicine and urine. Yet it would be truer to say that each of these relates differently—unequally—to the primary analogate.

The most profound misunderstandings of analogy stem not from a lack of awareness of the distinctions between types of analogy, but from a lack of awareness between a logical and a philosophical genus. Yet even Thomists’ treatments of analogy can lean toward obscurity

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 46–47.

²⁵ Dennis Q. McInerney, *Metaphysics* (Elmhurst, Pa.: Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, 2004), 51–53.

instead of clarity.²⁶ Our recent venture into literal versus figurative possession, for example, moved our focus away from the way beings relate to one another and toward the way terms relate to one another; this step is taken from philosophy toward logic. The distinctions between analogies of inequality, attribution, and proportion are, of course, needed and fruitful; but they exceed our present purpose, namely, to affirm analogy as an act of judgment that expresses an unequally proportionate relationship between beings—between one being to another, primary, subject being. Analogy, like genus, has to do with a multitude of beings unequally related to a primary subject. Thus, analogy is the language of philosophy, whose subject always includes a genus.

Genera and Language in Plato's *Republic*

The works of Plato, especially *The Republic*, so superbly display philosophical genera and philosophical language that they stand as exemplars of each and as accurate portrayals of reality, actually constituted.

To see 'a city come into being in speech' in Book II of *The Republic* is simultaneously to see a genus come into being, borne from contrary opposites.²⁷ The philosophical subject-genus *politics*, with its extremes of peace and war, emerges from the assembly of the πολις, with *political* and *just* predicated analogously of its citizen-species.

²⁶ Redpath, *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, vol. 2, 50.

²⁷ Here, we need to keep in mind Plato's words: "'It looks to me as though the investigation we are undertaking is no ordinary thing, but one for a man who sees sharply. Since we're not clever men,' I said, 'in my opinion we should make this kind of investigation of it: if someone had, for example, ordered men who don't see very sharply to read little letters from afar and then someone had the thought that the same letters are somewhere else also, but bigger and in a bigger place, I suppose it would look like a godsend to be able to consider the littler ones after having read these first, if, of course, they do happen to be the same.'" Plato, *The Republic*, 368d, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968; 2nd ed.), 45.

Man by himself is not self-sufficient. His every potential is made actual only by enterprise with other men. In other words, man *must* be a species in a genus if he is to survive as a man. No other beginning to the founding of that genus of which man is a species can exist other than men in need taking on one another as partners and helpers so as to organize a settlement aimed at supplying the many needs of individuals belonging to the real species *man*, including establishment and maintenance of peace.²⁸ The end of that political species cannot be achieved without manifold operations of a multitude of qualified species unequally related to that end. Each individual citizen-species needs the city in order to *have a realizable aim*, but the city needs each individual citizen-species to carry out operations that could realize that aim.

Man finds, at the earliest foundation of his shared settlement-enterprise, that his needs are prioritized and hierarchically arranged: food first, then housing, then clothing. Occupations are born. Farmers, house builders, weavers, and shoemakers emerge as the properly qualified species for providing these basic necessities.²⁹ These jobs, however, require tools. And, for the men operating in these professions to maximize their output, they may do only their respective jobs of farming, housebuilding, weaving, and shoemaking. So, new species emerge: carpenters, smiths, and other craftsmen to build tools; and cowherds, shepherds, and other herdsmen to provide beasts of burden for the farmers, as well as hides and wool for the weavers and shoemakers.³⁰

The city is located in a region that cannot, of itself, afford its citizens all of its needs. So it produces more than it needs for the purposes of trading with other cities. To do this, it must employ merchants, establish a currency, and erect a marketplace. Seafaring industry and trade emerge. Shipbuilders populate newly-erected shipyards, and ports

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 369b-c, 45–46.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 369d, 46.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 369e.

appear on the coastline. Tradesmen populate the marketplace, selling and buying to and from foreigners.³¹ Neither man nor his city is self-sufficient; man needs other men, and cities need other cities.

And each highly-skilled professional needs lesser-skilled wage-earners to accomplish his individual aims.³² Each, according to his talents—which are unequally distributed across the citizens of the city—cooperates to carry out the various operations, which, in turn, fulfill the city’s organizational aim: meeting basic human needs, such as food, shelter and clothing, plus maintaining peace and avoiding poverty.

A philosophical genus contains contrary opposites and a range of extremes. Because the philosophical subject-genus *politics* would be incomplete without examining the *πολις* *not* at peace, a portrait of the ‘luxurious city’ follows.

It begins with ‘relishes.’ In the peaceful, healthy, city, men sate their hunger with simple meals of barley meal and wheat flour; they drink and sing of the gods. In the ‘city of sows,’ men fare differently: salt, olives, cheese, boiled onions, and greens, as well as figs, myrtle berries, acorns, and the like.³³

With relishes comes an entirely different culture that includes, but is not limited to, comfortable furniture, perfume, and courtesans. All the basic items of necessity are adorned with precious metals and embroidered with dyed threads. These luxuries inevitably expand the size of the city to include more servants and entirely new industries and professions. An entertainment industry emerges, for example, with an array of performing and visual artists. Culinary artisans, cosmeticians, and stylists file in behind them. Teachers are needed now because fami-

³¹ *Ibid.*, 371a-d, 47–48.

³² *Ibid.*, 371e.

³³ *Ibid.*, 372a-e, 49.

lies are insufficient to raise and educate their own. Doctors, too, because of the luxuriously excessive diets.³⁴

The famous ‘health’ example for analogy returns to mind at this point. The primary analogate is still, of course, the body of the subject human being. But here we have an impressively expansive secondary analogate: an entire city become *fat and feverish*, and “gorged with a bulky mass of things.”³⁵

From the overreaching appetite for relishes, an entire city is polluted, corrupted through its individual citizen-species’ unchecked appetites. The desire for relishes and the concomitant ‘culture of relishes’ is found to be the origin even of war. The appetites of the sow-city cannot be sated by its own means, nor can it be satisfied by trade. The city at this point, in this state of *intemperance*, spills into its neighbors’ territories. It assembles large armies for acquisition of land, seizure of wealth, and destruction of any who attempt to intervene.³⁶

An entire class of citizens emerges: the warrior class, distinct from the abovementioned producer class. A warrior, if he is to be any good at all, must be only a warrior. Yet, a warrior *class*, if it is to be something more than a band of thugs, needs to be *ruled*. And, if the warrior class is to be ruled, it needs *rulers*. Thus, the emergence of a leadership class: the guardians, the maximum species in the city-genus.³⁷

The student of Plato ponders the guardians carefully and fruitfully. Plato leads him by the hand through their education and upbringing to an understanding of true leadership. Already captivated by the work as a whole, he is especially inspired in Book VII by the famous Allegory of the Cave. He sees the self-sacrificing nobility of the guardians in

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 373a-c, 49–50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 373c, 50.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 373e.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 374a-e, 51.

their return to the darkness of the cave so as to liberate their subjects made dim by the shadows and sluggish by the relishes. He sees the slavishness of the cave-dwellers and the self-mastery of the philosopher king. He accepts that only by wisdom does man master.

The student of Plato is likely to take the word of his teachers that the entire guardian class is symbolic of reason; the warrior class of higher passion; and the producer class of lower appetites. He sees wisdom ruling: both in the philosopher-king himself—ruling by reason over his own higher passions and lower appetites—and in the philosopher-king ruling over his subjects, classes dominated by passion and desire. He sees the individual human soul reflected in and represented by the collective, and he sees the collective as expressive of the individual.

In the *πολις* of the *Republic* and in his own soul, the student of Plato sees a one and a many, a genus: an organizational aim to which the coordinated operations of an unequally-related array of contrary opposite species are directed by a maximum species. He predicates justice analogously: to its differently-proportioned signs and causes, and to its primary subject.

If a student of philosophy were to read the *Republic* by the light of the philosophical genus as understood by St. Thomas Aquinas and with the philosophical language of analogy, he could abandon his preoccupation with the ways in which terms relate to terms and take up a new fascination with the ways in which beings relate to beings. With the assistance of qualified instructors, he could from there consider the ways in which creatures relate to the Creator.

Conclusion

Students of Plato can, by the light of St. Thomas Aquinas, move more easily into conclusions supported by Christian metaphysics.

Of course, I will not argue that the Allegory of the Cave and the ascent to the sun express Plato's assent to the one, true God; Plato was a pagan. The conclusion that Christianity somehow developed out of Plato's religion or philosophy is simply untenable.³⁸

I argue, however, that a proper understanding of genus and analogy better equips the *Republic* reader to gain a foothold in Christian metaphysics. For, by training us to observe the relation between real beings and to make correct judgments about those relationships, the philosopher's understanding of genus and analogy, as reported by St. Thomas, properly orients students toward reality. To see a city come into being in the *Republic* is to see a real genus come into being, an experience likely to prompt the kind of reflection upon being that leads to the question about a genus of being, and related questions of truth and goodness.³⁹ For, as Josef Pieper has acutely observed, from the reality that Being precedes Truth, and that Truth precedes the Good, "The structural framework of Western Christian metaphysics as a whole stands revealed."⁴⁰



³⁸ Cf. Étienne Gilson, "God and Greek Philosophy," in his *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 1–37.

³⁹ That thoughtful reflection upon being should lead to questions of truth and goodness lay in the fact that being asserts itself "without any additions," as Étienne Gilson points out, "in its unity, its truth and its goodness; whatever the relations of identity which our thought may assert . . . whatever the truth affirmed or the good desired by us: it is always to the being that our thought returns as to the fixed harmony of being with itself, whether our mind assimilates the object by means of knowledge or enjoys its perfection by means of the will." Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 348.

⁴⁰ Josef Pieper, "Being—Truth—Good," in his *An Anthology*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 54.

**TO SEE A CITY COME INTO BEING IN SPEECH:
GENUS AND ANALOGY IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC***

SUMMARY

An understanding of the philosophical genus contributes to the perfection of the act of the philosophical habit of the human soul because reality is constituted by a multitude of overlapping genera. Because genera are constituted by a multitude of species unequally related to their generic aim, St. Thomas's teaching on virtual quantity facilitates an understanding of the diversity of being. Analogy is an act of judgment that expresses an unequally proportionate relationship between beings. Like genus, analogy has to do with a multitude of beings unequally related to a primary subject; as such, analogy is the language of philosophy. To see 'a city come into being in speech' in Book II of *The Republic* is to be trained to observe the relation between real beings, to make correct judgments about those relationships, and to thereby be properly oriented toward reality.

KEYWORDS

Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, genus, species, virtual quantity, analogy, being.

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