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THE USE OF ANALOGY IN THOMISTIC THEISM

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE OF ANALOGY	5
The Definition of Analogy	
Its Original Meaning	
Its Technical Usage	
The Importance of Analogy	
Its General Importance	
Its Importance for Thomism	
The History of Analogy	
Analogy Before Plato	
Analogy In Plato	
Analogy In Aristotle	
Analogy In Neo-Platonism	
Analogy In Early Christian Fathers	
Analogy In Aquinas	
II. THE FUNCTION AND DIVISION OF ANALOGY	25
The Metaphysical Contribution	
The Paradox of Parmenides and Heraclitus	
The Solution of Aquinas	
The Various Kinds of Analogy	
Analogy of Inequality	
Analogy of Attribution	
Analogy of Proper Proportionality	
Metaphorical (Improper)	
Metaphysical (Proper)	
The Epistemological Implications of Analogy	
Used in Our Knowledge of Being	
Used in Our Knowledge of God Infinite Being	
III. THE USE OF ANALOGY TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE	44
The Sense in Which it is Needed	
Implicitly and Metaphysically	
Not Explicitly or Epistemologically	
The Use of Analogy in the "Five Ways"	
An Understanding of the "Five Ways"	
Used as the Middle Term of the Proof	
The Relation of Analogy to Causality	
It is Based in the Part of Causality	
It is Dependent Upon "Efficient" Causality	

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE OF ANALOGY	5
The Definition of Analogy	
Its Original Meaning	
Its Thomistic Usage	
The Importance of Analogy	
Its General Importance	
Its Importance for Thomism	
The History of Analogy	
Analogy Before Plato	
Analogy In Plato	
Analogy In Aristotle	
Analogy In Neo-Platonism	
Analogy In Early Christian Fathers	
Analogy In Aquinas	
II. THE FUNCTION AND DIVISION OF ANALOGY	25
The Metaphysical Contribution	
The Paradox of Parmenides and Heraclitus	
The Solution of Aquinas	
The Various Kinds of Analogy	
Analogy of Inequality	
Analogy of Attribution	
Analogy of Proper Proportionality	
Metaphorical (Improper)	
Metaphysical (Proper)	
The Epistemological Implications of Analogy	
Implied in Our Knowledge of Being	
Applied in Our Knowledge of God Infinite Being	
III. THE USE OF ANALOGY TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE.	44
The Sense in Which it is Needed	
Implicitly and Metaphysically	
Not Explicitly or Epistemologically	
The Use of Analogy in the "Five Ways"	
An Understanding of the "Five Ways"	
Used as the Middle Term of the Proof	
The Relation of Analogy to Causality	
It is Based in the Fact of Causality	
It is Dependent Upon "Efficient" Causality	

IV. THE USE OF ANALOGY TO SHOW GOD'S ESSENCE 62

- The Possibility of Knowing God's Essence
 - It Would Seem That
 - On the Contrary
 - I Answer That
- The Procedure of Showing God's Essence
 - It Would Seem That
 - On the Contrary
 - I Answer That
- The Kind of Analogy Used to Show God's Essence
 - It Would Seem That
 - On the Contrary
 - I Answer That

V. AN EVALUATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ANALOGY 91

- The Charge of Agnosticism
 - It Would Seem That
 - On the Contrary
 - I Answer That
- The Charge of Platonism
 - It Would Seem That
 - On the Contrary
 - I Answer That
- The Charge of Sophism
 - It Would Seem That
 - On the Contrary
 - I Answer That

BIBLIOGRAPHY 107

INTRODUCTION

Importance of Analogy

How can finite man with his limited concepts and terms speak meaningfully about the infinite? This, in general, is the question analogy seeks to answer. Since men from time immemorial have been conversing about the Creator, it was only natural that the question as to how this is possible should arise. Analogy attempts to explain this "how".

The question of analogy is important both for the theologian and the theist to say nothing of the scientist and the common man. For the student of revealed theology, analogy is necessary to explain how the eternal God can make Himself intelligible to man in temporal language. And for the natural theologian, analogy has the even more arduous task of explaining how natural reason may discover and define the infinite God from a consideration of finite things.

Purpose of this Work

Since the Thomistic theodicy is natural theology par excellence, it would appear that there is no better place to begin an analysis of analogy than in the progenitor of this school, St. Thomas Aquinas, "the chief glory of scholasticism" and the "angelic doctor". If the Thomists should prove to have explained by analogy how we may demonstrate God as we contemplate the world, then it should be no problem to understand how God can communicate to man since He is the greater of the two. If, on the other hand, St. Thomas cannot explain analogy, then his natural theology has failed. It is this latter problem we wish to consider in the present work.

Statement of the Problem

It will be the province of this paper, therefore, to discover whether or not the Thomistic doctrine of analogy is sufficient to support the weight of the metaphysical structure St. Thomas wishes to build upon it. That is to say, is Thomas' concept of analogy a solid link in the chain of theistic argumentation? Does it erect a sturdy bridge over the chasm that separates the finite from the infinite?

The Thomists, of course, have given a voluminous defense of analogy. But it seemed to me upon scanning the evangelical material on this subject that there was both a misunderstanding of the Thomistic position manifested in negative criticism and a paucity of any positive construction of the doctrine for evangelical apologetics. With this tentative outlook, the following evaluation of Thomistic analogy was undertaken.

The Method of Procedure

Since there was a prolific amount of Thomistic material on this subject with some complicated differences of opinion, it seemed more profitable to limit the topic to what St. Thomas himself taught on analogy. This procedure, however, has been modified by two handicaps: first, there has been no direct use of the original Latin texts of St. Thomas, and all are not available in English; secondly, much of the Thomistic doctrine of analogy is only implied in St. Thomas and explicated by his commentators. For these reasons we have chosen to evaluate St. Thomas in the light of his commentators with the intent of discovering what was actually implied in St. Thomas' doctrine itself. The commentators are viewed only as a tool for study. When some of them appear to misinterpret Thomas, we shall attempt to give reasons from Thomas and other commentators for an alternate choice. To sum it up, this analysis seeks to understand and evaluate what was stated or implied in the doctrine of analogy

which Thomas Aquinas taught in his basic writings. And at the same time we recognize that our interpretation of his doctrine will be mediated through the translations and the commentators.

In the first four chapters the entire approach has been sympathetic. We have attempted to present the exposition of analogy in St. Thomas through the eyes of a Thomist. To avoid needless repetition we here state that there is an implied "for St. Thomas or the Thomists" in all of the first four chapters. In the last chapter we have stated our own evaluations in the section entitled "I Answer That".

Assumptions of this Work

Analogy and epistemology are closely related in St. Thomas, but the scope of this work did not permit the discussion of both. So for the following reasons we have presupposed the basic Thomistic epistemology: (1) This is in accord with the actual procedure of St. Thomas himself who not having lived after Hume and Kant, never felt the compunctions of elaborating his epistemology before he began his natural theology. In fact, it would be a gross anachronism to expect him to do so. (2) Personally, I agree with Mascall that it is as unnecessary to expound one's epistemology before beginning to talk about God as it is to understand human physiology before beginning to talk about the world.¹ (3) Furthermore, though epistemology and analogy are closely related, they are separable to some extent -- at least enough so that our conclusion may be a hypothetical one as: if Thomistic epistemology is valid, then analogy is solid or even though Thomistic epistemology were valid, analogy still would not be sufficient. Such a contingent conclusion will be demanded by the nature of the epistemological assumption of this evaluation.

¹Eric I. Mascall, Existence and Analogy, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949)., P. 45.

The Outline

Because there is a semantical difficulty in the comprehension of thomistic terminology, the historical background of analogy has been discussed first before it is applied to the demonstration of God's existence and essence. And even before the latter is elaborated, we have attempted to discover the metaphysical significance of analogy since it was upon his cosmology that Thomas built his cosmological argument. For Thomas the roots of analogy are metaphysical and its fruit is theological.

From this vantage point it has been easier to see the significance of the famous "five ways" and how they are related to analogy. Then, once the demonstration for God's existence has been examined, it will follow to view the application of analogy in the description of God's essence. And finally, we have attempted to evaluate Thomas' doctrine in the light of some of the most important criticisms that have been leveled against it. The conclusion we arrive at is based on whether or not the Thomists, by principles consistent with St. Thomas' own system have been able to sustain the lofty claims of the analogical process.

Quotations from St. Thomas

When citing passages from the works of Aquinas we have followed the more meaningful method according to the division of his works rather than the common method of giving the page number. Passages from the Summa Contra Gentiles will be, for example, I, 34 which indicates volume and chapter. From the Summa Theologica (3 volumes), the references will be I, Q3, A2 indicating the volume, question, and article respectively. References from other works of Thomas follow the similar division of the books themselves rather than the arbitrary page number.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE OF ANALOGY

The Definition of Analogy

"There is no word...which is used more loosely, or in a greater variety of senses, than analogy."¹ A glance at any unabridged dictionary will at once reveal the truth of this statement. Several of the more inclusive categories of analogy are: (1) popular analogies used in everyday speech to express any sort of likeness,² (2) logical analogies which are reasonings from resemblance and are generally unacceptable to logicians, (3) scientific analogies which form the basis of probable inductions, (4) mathematical analogies where there is a quantitative identity of proportions or fractions which yield valid conclusions, and (5) metaphysical and theological analogies in which there is an elevated significance of everyday terms as applied to the "real" or the "spiritual" realms.

Its Original Meaning

Etymologically, however, analogia was a mathematical word. "According to Aristotle, it signified an equality of proportions or a proportionality."³

¹John S. Mill, A System of Logic (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884), p. 86.

²James F. Anderson, The Bond of Being (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1949). Most of this paragraph is taken from pp. 1-20.

³Thomas Gilby, Philosophical Texts, Selections from Thomas Aquinas (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 12.

"The Greek word, $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, from which analogy has sprung, implied accordingly in the combination $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ a mathematical proportion."¹ Some neo-platonists ascribe the discovery of this mathematical theory to Pythagoras who was supposed to have received it from the Babylonians.²

Its Thomistic Usage

However, we are not so much concerned with the mathematical origin, but with the metaphysical usage of this term in the writings of St. Thomas.

The Transition made by the Greeks.--Gradually, through Plato, Aristotle and the early Christian writers, the term dropped its mathematical connotations and came to denote only a metaphysical proportionality.³ So then the quantitative aspects of proportionality are not to be found in its purely metaphysical usage, and the mathematical appearance of the proportion is only apparent and not real.

The Definition made by Thomas.--Accordingly, even though St. Thomas uses a mathematical illustration for analogy,⁴ he nevertheless has a metaphysical conception of it.⁵ In fact, his definition of analogy ignores this mathematical

¹Hampus Lyttkens, The Analogy Between God and the World (Alquist and Wiksell's Boktryckeri ab Uppsala, 1952), p. 15.

²Lyttkens warns against putting too much stock in this supposed derivation since most of our sources are late and secondhand. Furthermore a practice existed, even in Plato and Aristotle "to describe as Pythagorean any philosopher with a tendency to a mathematical conception of the universe". Ibid., p. 15.

³It is difficult to say just when and where this happened, but there is a general feeling that the first purely metaphysical usage came in Plato. Arthur Little, Platonic Heritage of Thomism (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books Limited Standard House, 1949, p. 225.

⁴Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica (Chicago: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1947), vol. I, 13, 6.

⁵Anderson says: "The 'mathematical appearance' of proportionality is merely an appearance: the analogy itself is in no sense mathematical. Perhaps

structure and attempts to strike a metaphysical mean. Speaking of analogy he says: "This mode of community (of attributes) is midway between purely equivocal and completely univocal predi^oction".¹ Thus analogy is the "half way"² point between univocity and equivocity. Since univocal terms are entirely alike and equivocal terms are entirely different, analogous terms are at once alike and different or "partly" similar and "partly" dissimilar.³

The Elaboration made by Thomists.--Because the significance of Thomas' words are so succinctly couched in a kind of syllogistic brevity, one must seek the explication of his commentators in order to grasp the full meaning of his paucity.⁴ Among the commentators of Thomas on analogy, Cajetan stands head and shoulders above all.⁵ He carefully distinguishes analogy in the

the very term proportionality invites misunderstanding, as well as the mathematical-seeming illustrations given of it. A better term would be welcome; but any other term might be equally susceptible of erroneous interpretation". Anderson, op. cit., p. 288.

¹Aquinas, op. cit., I, Q13, A5C.

²Actually analogy is closer to equivocity than univocity. All that "...St. Thomas asks of the notion of analogy is that it permit the metaphysician or the theologian using metaphysics to speak of God without constantly falling into pure equivocation and even sophistry". It is a "...manner of speaking not altogether equivocal". Etienne Gilson, Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Translated by L. K. Shook (New York: Random House, 1956), pp. 105, 106.

³However, since Thomas' use of analogy is strictly metaphysical, we are to be warned against the use of any quantitative terms as "part" in describing it. See George P. Klubertanz, Introduction to the Philosophy of Being (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), p. 63.

⁴Jaques Maritain has pointed out that "...of course it would be a great mistake not to scrutinize eagerly St. Thomas' text itself....But it would be no less a mistake to neglect the invaluable contribution made by his great commentators, whom I would prefer to call his continuers". Preface of John of St. Thomas, The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas, translated by Yves P. Simon, Joan J. Glanville, G. Donald Hollenhorst (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. vi.

⁵He is also called Thomas de Vio. His brief work, The Analogy of Names, according to John of St. Thomas, is done "with such thoroughness

following manner: "Things which give rise to univocation are similar to one another in the sense that the foundation of similitude in one has exactly the same nature as the foundation of similitude in the other....On the other hand, things which give rise to analogy are similar in the sense that the foundation of similitude in one is absolutely different in nature from the foundation of similitude in the other...and because of this they are said to be the same proportionally or analogically".¹ It is clear from this that analogy is not a subdivision of univocity in any sense though it has a "univocal element" in it.² As John of St. Thomas puts it, "...those terms are called analogues whose meaning is not absolutely diverse but admits of some unity".³

So then, analogy is a "mean"⁴ which evades the antipodes of the univocal--equivocal dilemma. The significance of this for Thomism will become apparent when it is applied to God, but first, the importance of analogy in general will be discussed.

and subtilty that no room is left for any novel elaboration". John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 27. In the introduction to the English translation Henry J. Koren, a modern Thomist, says: "Cajetan's well-known work de analogia contains the first and still unsurpassed systematization of the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of analogy. As such it is the classical treatise of analogy and forms the basis of practically all modern discussions of the arduous problem of analogy". Thomas de Vio Cajetan, The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being, translated by Edward A. Bushinski in collaboration with Henry J. Korén (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1953), Vol. IV, p. ix.

¹Ibid., p. 30.

²As to whether or not it is a subdivision of equivocity or not Thomists are not in agreement. Bochenski writes: "...Thomists were right when they named their analogia as a subclass of the class aequivoca and some modern Thomists are wrong when they put analogy as a third class coordinated to univocity and equivocity". I. M. Bochenski, "On Analogy", The Thomist, Vol. IX, (1948), p. 432.

³But the unity is not based on resemblance identity or equality of nature but is a proportional, relative unity. John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 154.

⁴However, Phelan warns against a stagnant concept of Thomas' view saying: "analogy is not a formula like the Cogito of Descarte, the Esse est

The Importance of Analogy

Analogy is "...one of the most important problems for contemporary philosophy". Phelan claims that "...there is not a problem either in the order of being, or in the order of knowing, or in the order of predicating which does not depend for its ultimate solution on the principle of analogy. Not a question can be asked either in speculative or practical philosophy which does not require for its final solution an understanding of analogy".¹ Be that as it may, it is indisputable that analogy does play an important role in the various disciplines.

Its General Importance

The fields outside Thomistic theism are no more immune from the necessity of analogy than is the metaphysician of infinite being.

For Natural Science. --Even the scientist presupposes a kind of analogy in all his procedures. Casserley is willing to hazard the guess "...that even in natural science the idea of law is a misinterpretation of analogy".² And since the aim of science is to unify and systematize its findings it may be said with Anderson that "no real unity in multiplicity or identity in diversity, no analogy; no analogy, no science".³

For Revealed Theology. --As Farrer has pointed out, even the dogmatic theologian is caught up in the same necessity. Says he,

percipi of Berkley or the Sythetic a priori of Kant; it cannot be univocally applied to the solution of every problem that arises. Analogy is a principle which must be properly interpreted and proportionately adapted to each particular order of knowledge". Gerald Bernard Phelan, St. Thomas and Analogy (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1941), p. 4.

¹Phelan, op. cit., p. 1.

²Julian V. L. Casserley, The Christian in Philosophy (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1949), p. 209.

³Anderson, op. cit., p. 319.

there is a superstition among revelationalists that by declaring themselves independent of any proof of God by analogy from the finite world, they have escaped the necessity of considering the analogy or relation of the finite to the infinite altogether. They are completely mistaken. For all their statements about God must be expressed and are plainly expressed in language drawn from the finite World.¹

And the reason that the revelationalist does not escape the problem is because

the entire vocabulary of religion is based upon the perception of analogies between the material and the spiritual worlds. Words which now bear an immaterial and spiritual significance were originally used to denote visible and tangible objects.²

For the Natural Theologian.--

This is undoubtedly true, however reluctant the revelationalists may be to admit it; nevertheless the doctrine of analogy plays a far larger part among those who believe in natural theology,³ for in their case it is not merely a question of explaining how God can be spoken about in language derived from our experience of a finite world....There is also the question how the infinite can be seen to exist from the consideration of finite things and what relation God can have towards them; for the cosmological theist analogy is not merely a matter of linguistics and of psychology but of metaphysics too.⁴

This fact may best be seen upon examining the importance of analogy in Thomistic theism which is the natural theology par excellence.

Its Importance for Thomism

St. Thomas never really explained himself at length on the subject of analogy though he often mentions it and everywhere presupposes it.⁵

¹Austin M. Farrer, Finite and Infinite (London: The Westminster Press, 1943), p. 2.

²G. C. Joyce, "Analogy", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1955), p. 416.

³Mascall further suggests that "...the neglect of this doctrine among English speaking thinkers outside the Roman communion is responsible for much of the unsatisfactoriness of Anglo-Saxon natural theology...." Eric I. Mascall, Existence and Analogy (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), p. 92

⁴Ibid., p. 92.

⁵Cajetan says, "it is a well known fact that St. Thomas speaks about analogy almost as frequently as about act and potency of participation". Cajetan, op. cit., p. 7.

But his commentators have generally given it a very important status.¹

The Fact of its Importance.--However, one may observe the significance analogy had in the consciousness of Thomas by the numerous allusions to it in his works. On this basis Paterson concludes that we may reasonably infer that St. Thomas himself felt that this was "one of the most fundamental problems" with which he dealt.² The reason for this may be, as Cajetan has pointed out, that Thomas' "...main concern was with the application of analogy to philosophical and theological problems"³ and not the theoretical explication of it, though he did the latter as well.

The Reason for its Importance.--The reason for the importance of analogy in Thomism is at once obvious when we understand it to be the center link in the chain of theistic argumentation. It forms the structure of the bridge that spans the chasm separating the realm of the infinite from that of the finite. This will doubtless be understood when one recalls that for Thomas human reason alone can establish the existence and nature of God without the aid of revelation.⁴

So important is analogy for Thomism that some have claimed that it would be a fruitful task to rewrite the whole history of philosophy in terms of it.⁵ So in order to appreciate fully the implications of analogy in Thomas, we shall briefly sketch the development of it before his time.

¹ Gilson suggests that the reason for this "...is due to a secret longing [among Thomists] to redeem an all too apparent misery, the knowledge of God which St. Thomas will concede us". Gilson, op. cit., p. 105.

² Robert Leet Paterson, The Conception of God in the Philosophy of Aquinas (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1933), p. 227.

³ Cajetan, op. cit., p. 7, [emphasis mine].

⁴ St. Thomas does not deny the historical influence of revelation on reason but contends that reason does not borrow any premises from revelation in establishing its conclusion.

⁵ Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 16.

The History of Analogy

According to Lyttkens, no one has yet rewritten the history of philosophy from the viewpoint of analogy.¹ Most of the early records are scant and re-hashed but there are fragments that would indicate a presocratic origin, perhaps in Pythagoras.

Analogy Before Plato

The Probable Origin.--The original Greek word implies a mathematical proportion, and as was said, it has been customary to ascribe "...the discovery of the mathematical theory of proportions to Pythagoras, who according to Jamblichus learnt it from the Babylonians".² Though most of the sources for this are late and uncertain, there is one early fragment in which a Pythagorean, Archytas, describes analogy in detail.

The Pythagorean Usage.--Archytas regards it as a kind of "mean" (mesothesis) and differentiates three kinds of mathematical analogies--the harmonic, the arithmetical and geometrical. (1) The first may be disregarded since it played no significant part in the subsequent development of philosophy. (2) The arithmetical is what is now called an arithmetic series. The analogous likeness consists in there being an equal distance or interval between the digits. That is, as 6 is 2 away from 4, so 8 is 2 away from 6 and 10 from 8, etc. (3) Geometric analogy was the predecessor of the latter mathematical proportionality. It consisted of two couples of numbers interrelated in the same way. This was their true concept of analogy and was called "geometric" because that is where it was discovered and how it was symbolized.

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²The substance of this section is a condensation of Lyttkens' treatment of the early history of analogy. Ibid., p. 18ff.

The Proportional Relation.--In both the arithmetic and the geometric analogies it was not the likeness of relation but the position of a certain term that comprised the analogy. For example, in the proportion two/four : : four/eight, it is "four" that occupies the middle position and hence comprises the analogy. The same is true of the middle or key number in a series as well as this fractional form. And with this mathematical clue the pythagoreans proceeded to solve the mysteries of reality by linking the world of irrational numbers with the realm of rational numbers. Thus analogy was used to penetrate other realities not directly accessible to them.

Nevertheless, analogy was left in a rather ambiguous and uncertain state of affairs. For having once stated that certain numbers were analogous, they felt no further need to show how the terms were related. And "owing to its diffuse character, it is often difficult to decide with full certainty what they actually meant by analogy".¹ Lyttkens says that "as far as can be determined from our sources, Plato was the first to make any real use of analogy without any direct connection with mathematics."²

Analogy in Plato

The Various Kinds.--Plato used the concept of analogy in three or four different ways.

[1] In the first place, its original mathematical character is retained in some of his sayings, where it refers to like mathematical relations between the cosmic elements. [2] Secondly, he designates as analogous similar general relations between different kinds of knowledge and spheres of reality. [3] Thirdly, analogy has with him come to designate similarity in the function of two things. Instead of like relations between two couples, analogy is here beginning to designate similarity in general of two things. In these three cases analogy signifies relations between things and various facts, but in one of his sayings it at any rate approaches

¹Ibid.

²Ibid. Boshinski agrees saying, "Plato and Aristotle introduce the term into philosophy to indicate proportions which are not mathematical" in Cajetan, op. cit., p. 10, N 5.

another sense, viz., [4] to indicate the nature of certain concepts, which is an important difference in the use to which analogy is put. [a] It may signify certain real likenesses or relations between different phenomena but also [b] logical definitions of certain concepts and their uses.¹

The Progress Indicated.--It was in the latter way that Plato prepared the way for a later use of analogy, as he asserts that the Demiurge made the world as like himself as possible.² He has here departed from the mathematical use and has transferred analogy into the sphere of all-round similarities of relations.

Furthermore, the comparison Plato makes of the sun to the Good is of great historical interest because it is the basis of the subsequently appearing theory of the analogical knowledge of God. And his thoughts of the Good as the producer of products similar to but not identical with itself probably gave rise to the neoplatonic theory of exemplar causality and the similarity of cause and effect.

Analogy in Aristotle

"Aristotle's contribution to the analogy concept is naturally mainly in the sphere of logic. He developed analogy as a means of determining a concept and its meaning."³ Nevertheless his genius to systematize and classify worked its way into the spheres of biology and ethics⁴ as well.

Analogy and Generic Classification.--Aristotle was the first one who seriously attempted to classify animal species by using analogy as a kind of

¹Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 26.

²Plato, Plato's Cosmology, translation of Timaeus with commentary by F. M. Cornford and K. P. French (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1937), p. 29E.

³Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 29.

⁴In ethics Aristotle uses the arithmetic analogy which for him is the "golden mean" between ethical extremes. Ibid., p. 31 ff.

category to unite the most remote types. His classification is based on the degree to which different animals possess similar characteristics. Animals of identical types are put in the same species. But those differing only in degree are placed in a common genus. Among these genera there is analogous agreement between those most closely related. And finally there is a functional analogy say, for example, between the fins of a fish and the wings of a bird. That is, there is a similarity of function even though there is a vast difference in generic characteristics.

The Shift of the Analogous Concept.--So then the concept of analogy has shifted, as it previously did in one of Plato's cases, from signifying likeness in the relation of two couples to a functional or a general likeness. Lyttkens feels that it is difficult to tell whether this shift is really tending toward a "structural" and "inner" likeness or merely an actual functional likeness. At least there is a tendency in the latter direction.¹

An Apparent Contradiction.--Aristotle held that God and the world were mutually independent. God had caused the world not by efficient causality but by final causality as the Unmoved mover who moved the world as the Lover is moved by the beloved.² But at the same time, he asserted that God was pure act and the world, potency which is a relation of efficient and material causality. But, as Little says, he does not draw the logical implications.³ And "...it

¹Ross feels that these differentia include something that has the same function as substance. Hence, for him Aristotle has gone all the way to an analogy of structural likeness. Aristotle, The Works of Aristotle Translated into English, translated by W. D. Ross (2nd edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), "Metaphysics", Vol. II, 229.

²Ibid., p. 147.

³Little explains the inconsistency this way: "It seems reasonable therefore to conclude that Aristotle, though he implied analogy between God and the world, knew that his doctrine of an independent world was inconsistent with any real analogy between them; and therefore he never expressly asserted

does not seem too harsh to conclude that his concept of analogy was somewhat vague and his perception of it in real things fitful and inconsistent".¹

Analogy in Neo-Platonism

The Transition.--Analogy continued in general usage among the post Aristotelian Greeks in the sense of a general correspondence though the sense of mathematical proportion survived as well. The influence of Plato's and Aristotle's views are also noticeable though the doctrine itself is given new meaning primarily by the neo-platonists.²

The Three Kinds.--"There are three principal uses of analogy which we want to examine: [1] for designating statements ἀφ' ἑνός καὶ πρὸς ἑν; [2] for stating some form of distributive justice...; [3] and as a means of linking up different spheres of reality."³

(1) The use of these phrases appear in Aristotle in an analogous sense but when the Neo-Platonists inserted Plato's theory of ideas, they took on new analogical significance. To them the concept ἀφ' ἑνός καὶ πρὸς ἑν meant Being. When they coupled with this the "...idea that that which by its existence produces a character in a higher degree",⁴ then they had connected analogy with emanation and a hierarchy of being.

(2) With this latter principle, they connected the second usage of analogy. (a) For it was analogy which explained to the Neo-Platonists how the

that any real analogy existed. In his own mind he had arguments both for and against analogy between God and the world but perhaps never allowed himself to consider the arguments in its favor". Little, op. cit., p. 275.

¹Ibid., p. 276.

²Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 58.

³Ibid., p. 59.

⁴Ibid., p. 63.

same phenomenon or form¹ could recur "...on the different levels of the hierarchy of being, but assume each time a different character corresponding to that particular level, thus becoming a union of identity and unlikeness".²

(b) Connected to this is the principle of distributive justice. By analogy the whole world is held together which gives to each part a participation in the whole. Thus there is a proportionate likeness of all both small and great in the eyes of God.³

(3) The last usage forms the connecting link between the sensible and the intelligible worlds. Between the One and the soul there is a connection of analogy, but since the One is above the soul, the soul's powers of knowledge are insufficient. Therefore, Plotinus speaks of an analogous knowledge of the One which is attained by a mystical abstraction (negation) and made possible by what ^aemanates from the One.⁴

Analogy in Early Christian Fathers

Before Augustine.--For the most part the doctrine of analogy was only implied but not explicated by the early fathers. Joyce says:

But however legitimately and successfully this method of argument was employed by the fathers, it was not by them subjected to reflective criticism. A real advance was therefore made when the schoolman entered upon a rigorous examination of the limits of the method with particular use in theology.⁵

Arthur Little confirms this when he writes:

¹That is, how e.g. intelligence, life, and being can be found both at the top and near the bottom of a hierarchy. As Lyttkens comments, "this is accordingly but a short step from...an analogy". Ibid., p. 81

²Ibid., p. 80.

³Ibid., p. 78

⁴Ibid., p. 105.

⁵Joyce, op. cit., p. 416.

The neo-platonic Fathers...undoubtedly conceived of God analogically and implied analogy in their writings, but did not expressly explain it or advert to its implications. Dionysius, the Areopagite, does assert a proportion amongst things, but does not precise his ideas. His disciple, Erigena, in attempting to express the transcendence of God and His remoteness from creatures, calls Him by the unfortunate term non-being.... But he certainly failed to explain the element of similarity between God and creatures necessary for analogy. Finally, Averroes taught that being in God though analogical with being in creatures is incommunicable to others.¹

But none of the early Fathers has left us with a systematic analysis of analogy. If it was conceived important to them it was doubtless a presupposed importance.

In Augustine.--One can better see the status of pre-thomistic analogy in an analysis of Augustine for he, as no other father to his time, sums up the wisdom of his predecessors. Thilly calls Augustine the last of the Christian classicists with whom ends the patristic period of Christian doctrine and to whom are traceable the historical roots of embryonic scholasticism.² So then, we may expect Augustine to say as well or better what his patristic predecessors have said about analogy and imply what his scholastic successors were eventually to assert concerning it. In a sense, this is what he did and in the following fashion.

(1) First, it must be noted that St. Augustine used some neo-platonic concepts in describing the relation of the world to God.³ But for Augustine the world's relation to God was based on creation⁴ and not emanation.

¹Little, op. cit., p. 226.

²Thilly, History of Philosophy, p. 115.

³An investigation of how far these concepts were given a Christian significance is a vast problem which we cannot here discuss. We are inclined to feel that Augustine did a little more than put the truth of his Christianity into the terms of Platonism and that at times he slipped into the views of the Platinians as well. For an extreme view (viz., that he didn't import any platonic errors into Christianity) see Sister Garvey's Augustine: Christian or Neo-Platonist?

⁴Creation ex nihilo was foreign to Greek philosophy. Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 110. The world was made rather ex hula, according to some of the early Greek

(2) Augustine did, however, adopt a hierarchy of being from the Neo-Platonists. In it there are four things: matter, life, intelligence and God in that order from the bottom up.¹ The higher a thing is, the greater participation it has in esse and the more it is like God.

(3) Furthermore, he adopted the platonic thought that all existing things are images of ideas, however, not part of the Demiurge's intellect but prototypes in the divine mind. In connection with this, Augustine elaborated his theory of divine "illumination", viz., that the soul of man only knows spiritual things by a participation in the divine ideas.²

(4) This latter forms implicitly his concept of analogous knowledge of God. Creation is a participation in the highest good or God, and knowledge is a participation in the highest idea or God. So that man has and knows in a degree what God has and knows perfectly.

(5) From this one might expect that Augustine would reason from creation to God as from the sensible to the invisible after the style of Plotinus or even as Romans 1:20³ might indicate to him. But he did not. Following Christian tradition he says very little on this point. He stresses mainly the negative side of man's knowledge. God is ineffable. "How can man conceive God by his intellect when he cannot even understand him in his heart."⁴

Analogy in Aquinas

Between Augustine and Aquinas.--For the most part between Augustine

cosmologists or ex Deo according to the pantheists, deists, etc.

¹Ibid., p. 113.

²Augustine, Basic Works of Augustine

³Lyttkens says, "...that invisibilia Dei, Romans 1:20, are by Augustine meant to signify the ideas in God. To know God via the sensible is accordingly to go from things to their ideas in God". Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 114, N 2.

⁴Ibid., p. 115.

and Thomas' immediate predecessors there is no significant development of analogy over that of Augustine's.¹ From the point of view of the philosophic influence in theology one might almost agree with A. G. Pegis that before the twelfth century the European theological tradition consisted in a series of footnotes on Neo-Platonic Augustinianism.²

Thomas' Immediate Predecessors.--When we come to Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and Albert the Great we have the beginning of a new emphasis on the use of analogy in theology which shows the marked influence of the newly revived study of Aristotle.³

(1) For Alexander God is described from His effects. One begins with Aristotle in the things of sense and from these effects describes their proper cause. But in so describing the process of analogy these men did not depart from the concept of "participation" they had learned from Plotinus through Augustine. For it was by means of "participation" that the effect had received its likeness to the cause. But what they did do was to reassert, with the aid of a starting point in Aristotelian realism, what Plotinus had first suggested, viz., that we may acquire an analogous⁴ knowledge of a cause via

¹Leighton goes so far as to write, "it is no exaggeration to say that the spirit of Neo-Platonism and Medieval Christianity are identical....Augustine, whose thought dominated the whole of Medieval Christianity was himself a Neo-Platonic convert from Manicheism". Leighton, The Field of Philosophy, p. 141.

²A. G. Pegis, St. Thomas and the Greeks (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1939), p. 73.

³Until the turn of the thirteenth century at which time the writings of Aristotle were introduced to the east by the Moslems, there were almost no extant writings of Aristotle available for western theologians. See Fredrick Copleston, A History of Philosophy (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1955), Vol. II, p. 186.

⁴Alexander is faced with an apparent contradiction in his thinking when he also asserts an innate knowledge of God which he rather unsuccessfully tries to reconcile with this analogous knowledge. Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 130.

its effects.¹

(2) "In Bonaventure, a pupil of Alexander's and a contemporary of Aquinas, we meet lines of thought similar to those of Alexander, but get an impression that he tries to follow up some of St. Augustine's ideas more closely than Alexander does."² A frequently recurring thought is that all knowledge of God is through His effects, but he classifies such knowledge into three degrees of distinctness or lucidity. Creation bears witness to God as "shadow", "trace" and "image". In this he reflects a kinship to Augustine's view that creation is of different degrees of likeness to God. But even Bonaventure has not shaken off the taints of idealism for the knowledge of God obtained through His effects is also primarily obtained through the soul. And ultimately all our knowledge of God, be it via creation or via the soul, presumes the activity of God. It is infused and not abstracted.³ So then "St. Bonaventure is on the whole a faithful disciple of St. Augustine, and it is mostly in the relation of the soul to the sensible world that he has adopted some Aristotelian thoughts".⁴

(3) When we pass to Albert the Great we are faced with some difficulties that complicate our understanding of his views since as he himself admits, they are more encyclopedic than creative.⁵ There is traceable in his life a shift from Augustine to Aristotle which shift eventuated in the doctrine that knowledge of God in this life whether in nature or from grace comes from God's effects

¹Ibid., p. 124.

²Ibid., p. 131.

³Ibid., p. 135.

⁴Ibid., p. 153.

⁵Ibid., p. 154.

and is based on the analogical likeness of the effect to its cause. The manner in which this knowledge may be known is in three ways: those of negation, perfection, and causal relation.¹

Analogy in Aquinas Himself.--When we turn to Albert's pupil, Thomas of Aquino we see a summing up of his immediate predecessors' doctrine with traces of kinship to the early views as well. But all are combined with his own unique insight into the analogical nature of being.

A general survey of passages on analogy in Thomas indicates that he uses it primarily in a theological way. It is an aid in expressing the interrelations of God and creatures and also the means by which we ascend in our knowledge from the creature to God.²

Concerning kinship with previous views of analogy, we may briefly note the following things: (1) As Aristotle, he proceeds from the external world of sensible things. (2) Unlike Aristotle but akin to Plato he considers contingent effects of the finite world to bear some likeness to their exemplar cause. (3) Unlike Plato and like Plotinus these effects are not merely ideas but have an actual existence in the hierarchical structure of being. (4) But unlike Plotinus and like Augustine the participation of beings in this hierarchy is not based on emanation but creation. (5) And unlike Augustine but like Albert the

¹This is found in Pseudo-Dionysius and was later adopted by Aquinas as well. Ibid., p. 156.

²Joyce says, "among the reasons which led them [the schoolmen] to undertake the task [of explicating analogy] was their desire to find philosophical justification for the anthropomorphic language of scripture. Such language obviously could not be taken literally, nor yet dismissed as merely metaphorical, and therefore implying no real likeness between God and His creatures. The schoolmen's answer to the problem is to be found in their theory of analogy, which concerns itself not only with the explanation of the analogical use of language, but also with the far deeper and more important question of the reality and extent of the analogy between the finite and the infinite and the legitimacy of inference from one to the other". Joyce, op. cit., p.416.

Great, man ascends to a knowledge of the first cause via the perception of His effects in sensible things and not innately.

From this St. Thomas might seem to be an eclectic. Nevertheless, "whatever he may have taken from earlier Christian, semi-Christian or even pagan sources, the remarkable fact is not just where St. Thomas found his material, but what he did with it".¹ And what he did do was to develop the principle of analogy into a full-fledged metaphysical doctrine as no one before him had.² "St. Thomas may have gathered hints for his doctrine from these writers. But in fact it is more just and probable that St. Thomas originated or rather discovered independently the doctrine of analogy for himself."³ Exactly what that discovery was will be discussed in the next chapter.

SUMMARY

The principle of analogy is important for both the revelationalists and the natural theologian though more so for the latter since it is a necessary step in the staircase by which he ascends from the finite to the infinite. The word "analogy" itself originally denoted a mathematical proportion but gradually dropped the quantitative connotations until after Plato and Aristotle and particularly in Aquinas it has a purely metaphysical connotation. It is generally considered that Pythagoras gave the doctrine its start in western philosophy and he allegedly borrowed the concept from the Babylonians. In general, his concept was mathematical while Plato later used it in more of an abstract sense. Aristotle's primary contribution was with analogy in logic while the Neo-Platonists gave the principle an ontological status in their hierarchy of being. For

¹Mascall, op. cit., p. 45.

²Anderson, op. cit., p. 324.

³Little, op. cit., p. 227.

the most part the early Christian fathers implied analogy in their theology and based it on creation but did not explicate it. It was left then for the schoolmen and particularly Aquinas to state the theological implications of the doctrine and at the same time establish its metaphysical significance. Such, in general, is the Thomistic view of the background and importance of analogy.

CHAPTER II

THE FUNCTION AND DIVISION OF ANALOGY

The Metaphysical Contribution

Though St. Thomas was primarily a theologian, when he set his genius to the task of understanding the relation of God and the world he discovered a truth with profound metaphysical insights as well. For in his doctrine of analogy may be found an answer to the age old problem of the one and the many that none of his predecessors had so clearly understood. And Thomas' "... solution to the problems explicitly raised and implicitly suggested by the apparent antinomy of Being and Becoming, the One and the Many, is to be found in his doctrine of analogy".¹

The Paradox of Parmenides and Heraclitus²

To the philosopher this issue is proverbial. It has perplexed the sages of every generation in its varied forms and with its deep implication. Simply put it is the question of how we can have unity when all is diversity or, vice versa, how there can be any diversity when all is unity. Accordingly, when given its full metaphysical implications, the question is one of being or becoming. If all is becoming, how can there be any being, or if all is being, how can there be any becoming. But there seems to be both--an apparent dilemma.

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 22.

²For a detailed discussion of this problem and the Thomistic solution see R. Scannell, "Being and Becoming", New Scholastic (1938), XI, P. 254 ff.

The Heraclitian Answer.--The first of the classical extremes was Heraclitus who argued that all was becoming and hence there is no being. Plutarch quoting him says, "...every mortal nature, being in the middle of coming to be and passing away, provides a phantom, a dim and uncertain apparition of itself...for it is impossible to step twice into the same river according to Heraclitus, or to lay hands twice on mortal substance in a fixed condition....Therefore its becoming does not terminate in being...."¹ So everything is in a ceaseless flux. All is change and nothing is changeless but change itself. This pole of the dilemma is the one most apparent to our senses. For in our experience nothing is stagnant, all is in motion, and there is no permanence at all.

The Parmenidean Answer.--But for Parmenides, beginning with experience was exactly Heraclitus' mistake. The senses deceive. They afford only illusions. With the mind we know that there is only being and oneness, not becoming and multiplicity. The argument may be put very succinctly as follows: "Whatever is outside being is non-being; and whatever is non-being is nothing; hence, whatever is outside being is nothing. But being is the one; therefore, whatever is outside the One is nothing".² Since the mind must conclude that reality is One and Being (with Parmenides) and the senses perceive reality as Many and Becoming (with Heraclitus), we are caught in the paradox.

The Solution of Aquinas

It is at once apparent that in the two classical answers each denied the validity of the source of information that the other accepted. Heraclitus

¹Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragment, edited and commentary by G. S. Kirk (Cambridge: University Press, 1954), p. 381.

²Anderson, op. cit., pp. 86, 87 (translated from St. Thomas, "Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, I, 138.)

trusted his senses and dismissed the unity his mind would seem to demand for reality. And Parmenides denied the truth of sense report and accepted the unity his intellect demanded of reality. St. Thomas accepted both as valid and proceeded to show how this could be so.¹ Heraclitus leaned on extreme realism and reasoned a posteriori. Parmenides was at the idealistic pole and rationalized a priori. Thomas was a modified realist who could neither deny the report of sense experience and be petrified in the parmenidean One nor contradict the basic principles of reason and be swept away in the heraclitian flux. How did he do this?

By the Principle of Analogy.--For St. Thomas Aquinas "it is the principle of analogy which alone solves the 'antinomy' of the one and the many, conducting us over and between (not around) monism and anthropomorphism on the one side, pluralism and agnosticism on the other...." The question is not to be or not to be but to be and not to be.² That is, there is both reality and non-reality in "being". There is unity and diversity. "The unity of being in being is necessarily an analogical unity, were it univocal, diversity would be unintelligible; were it equivocal, nothing would be intelligible."³ In other words "non being" is not "nothing" as Parmenides has argued. "Thomas has shown, and held to his conclusion, that non-being which is not a denial of all being but only of all being except this much is not a contradiction in terms...."⁴

¹Aristotle before Thomas had given a solution to the problem on the order of essence by his act and potency (form and matter) or hylomorphic structure of beings. But St. Thomas was the first to apply this principle in the order of being. Thomas held that being itself is a composite of essence and existence. Etienne Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949), p. 185.

²Ibid., p. 19.

³Phelan, op. cit., p. 40, 41.

⁴Little, op. cit., p. 201.

The reason for this is that "non-being" is a limitation and not a negation of being. It is a real potentiality for being.

By Act and Potency.--Now the basis of an analogy of "being" is the fact that in "being" there is both actuality and potentiality.¹ Existence gives "being" its actuality and essence gives it potentiality. Hence, being is what it is and it is not what it has the potentiality to be. In other words "being" has an "isness" and an "isnotness". This means that, "the basis of diversity in beings is the division of being by potency and act--existence (esse) is diversified by essence (or form)...."² And hence, "passive potency is the solution of the oldest question in philosophy, the problem of the One and the Many, the problem of the possibility of more than one thing...."³

Thus it is St. Thomas' discovery of the distinction between essence and existence as act and potency that is at once the foundation of analogy and the Thomistic solution to the basic question of metaphysics.⁴

The Various Kinds of Analogy

What kind of analogy must this be to stand the strain of such meta-

¹St. Thomas says, "no act is limited but by a potency which is a receptive capacity". Thomas Aquinas, Compendium of Theology, translated by Cyril Vollert (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1949), p. 17.

²Phelan, op. cit., p. 40.

³Little, op. cit., p. 220.

⁴In the realm of theology this "...distinction between essence and existence expresses the radical contingency of existence in all that is not God. Substantially contemporaneous with the beginnings of Christian thought, it was inevitable that this fundamental intuition should find at length its appropriate technical formula. It appears from the first time clearly in Wm. of Auvergne:

It is of some moment, then to understand that the real distinction of essence and existence, although clearly formulated only at the beginning of the thirteenth century, was already virtually present after the first verse of Genesis". Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1936), pp. 435, 436.

physical weight that it can at once give answer to the "antinomy" of the ages and surpass the wisdom of the sages? In order to answer this, we must briefly survey the various kinds of analogy as used by St. Thomas. There are basically three:¹ (1) the analogy of inequality, (2) of attribution, and (3) of proportionality.²

Analogy of Inequality

Distinction from the Others.--To differentiate among these three kinds at the beginning will aid in the understanding of each in the end. (1) The analogy of inequality means that the similarity or likeness³ of different things is based upon an unequal participation in the same generic nature as dog and man both are equally animals but are not equal animals.⁴ (2) Analogy of attribution means that the similarity is based on a characteristic which properly belongs only to one thing but is attributed to another by virtue of its relationship to that thing. For example "health" belongs properly to an organism but food is called healthful because it causes health in the organism. (3) The analogy of proportionality means that the similarity or common characteristic belongs truly to all the participants only to each in proportion to its respective

¹We have chosen here to follow Cajetan's division of analogy in St. Thomas as have most Thomists. Anderson says, "...this division faithfully represents the thought of St. Thomas on analogy...." Anderson, op. cit., p. 20, N 47. Also see Cajetan, op. cit., p. 10.

²Phelan writes, "since Cajetan's De Nominum Analogia it is customary to deal with the doctrines of analogy in the philosophy of St. Thomas under the general heading of analogy of inequality, analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality--which corresponds exactly with the three types of analogy which St. Thomas himself distinguishes in his Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard". Phelan, op. cit., p. 26.

³It will be remembered that analogy for Thomas is a "mean". It is neither complete likeness nor total diversity but a "similarity".

⁴Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, II, 61, 1, ad 1.

kind of being.¹ It is a similarity of the proportions of two different things. For example, human wisdom is to finite man what divine wisdom is to the infinite God.

Described by Itself.--St. Thomas called this an analogy "according to being but not according to intention".² By this he means that "...there is a proportion in the being of the analogated perfection but not in the concept of it".³ That is, the concept itself is univocal but the beings represented by it are only analogous. They share a generic perfection unequally within the same genus. "For this 'analogy' consists precisely in that kind of imperfect likeness which arises from the unequal participation of things in a common generic character".⁴ Cajetan sums it up this way: "Things are said to be analogous by analogy of inequality if they have a common name, and the notion indicated by this name is exactly the same but unequally participated in. We are speaking here of inequality of perfection".⁵

Denied as Valid.--The logician refers to analogous terms of this type as univocal, but the philosopher regards them as equivocal because the former deal with the intention expressed by the term and the latter with the nature indicated by it.⁶ Phelan calls this a "thin analogy" which is the last refuge from monism and regards it as "utterly alien to analogy".⁷ As Anderson has put it,

¹Phelan, op. cit., p. 19.

²Cajetan, op. cit., p. 156, translated from Commentary on Sentences.

³Phelan, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴Anderson, op. cit., p. 30.

⁵Cajetan, op. cit., p. 11.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Phelan, op. cit., p. 27.

although this "analogy" contains a certain participation of true analogy inasmuch as it entails diversity in mode of realization it is an analogy only improperly so called; it is an analogy which is not formally analogical at all, but formally univocal. It is thus, in fact, only a sort of univocity and is therefore foreign to the nature of authentic analogy.¹

Why then is it considered with the other kinds of analogy? Because it is considered to be "...a potent source of intellectual evils in philosophy and even in theology...."² The most significant evil it entails is the pantheistic participation of all beings in one substance in unequal ways that we find in Plotinus.³

Analogy of Attribution

With the analogy of inequality there was a common nature or genus into which the analogates participated in diverse degrees, but in the analogy of attribution there is no common generic characteristic. There is one prime analogate which possesses a characteristic which is merely ascribed to the other analogates by virtue of some extrinsic relation they have to it. So there is an attribution according to priority (to the prime analogate) and posteriority (to the secondary analogates).

Defined in Itself.--The main feature of this analogy is that the form or characteristic signified by the analogous term "...pertains intrinsically to the principal analogate, extrinsically and by denomination to the other analogates". According to John of St. Thomas, three others follow upon this.⁴

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 90.

²Ibid.

³"'Analogy of inequality' is exemplified in a striking way in the plotinian universe. For here we are presented with a single, unique Perfection--the super-essential one, which, so to speak, flows into all things and in which all things participate in diverse degrees." Ibid., p. 68. According to Anderson the same error may be found in Spinoza, Bradley and Hoffding. Ibid., p. 70 ff.

⁴John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 159.

(1) The analogous characteristic must be numerically one since it is only found in one analogate, the prime one. (2) The characteristic of this prime analogate must be included in the definition of the others which derive their denomination from that characteristic. (3) All the analogates, prime and secondary, are not expressed by one concept; yet the various concepts which do express them are connected connotatively and hence are not equivocal.

Described by Various Names.--St. Thomas gives several different names to the analogy of attribution. (1) He calls it the "analogy of one to another"¹ or "of several to one"² because the denomination originating in one is received by several.³ (2) It is designated as a "proportion"⁴ because it basically denotes a correspondence or commensuration among several things to one thing.⁵ The proportion may be one of (a) degree (as a man's strength to the weight he can carry) or (b) of undetermination (as between God and creatures). (3) It is called "analogy according to a comparison" because the secondary analogates are compared to the prime analogate by designation. (4) And St. Thomas distinguishes it from analogy of inequality by calling it an analogy "according to intention but not according to being".⁶ "To understand this expression, notice that the intention or essence from which the denomination proceeds does not exist in all the analogates but only in one, viz., the principal."⁷

¹Aquinas, Summa, Q7, A7, body.

²Ibid.

³John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 156.

⁴This is to be sharply distinguished from "proportionality" which is the third kind of analogy. See Aquinas, Summa, I, Q2, All, body.

⁵John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 156.

⁶Anderson explains it to mean that "...when one intention is referred to several things by priority and posteriority and yet is realized in only one of them...." Anderson, op. cit., p. 97.

⁷John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 156.

Evaluated by Thomists.--Up to this point there has been relative unanimity among Thomistic commentators with regard to analogy. But when the question is asked concerning the metaphysical value of the analogy of attribution, they divide into three or four groups.¹ (1) First, there are those who follow Cajetan in asserting that proper proportionality is the only analogy properly so called.² (2) Opposed to this is the claim of Suarez that attribution alone gives the real metaphysical analogy. (3) Finally, there is Sylvester of Ferrara³ who asserts that there must be "attribution" in all analogies of proper proportionality to make them valid. (4) Another category might be formed of those (like Gilson) who do not try to reconcile all the passages in Thomas' writings but take only the Summa Theologica, his most mature work, and simply base analogy on a cause effect relation.⁴ Our own conclusion will be stated in chapter four after we examine exactly how Thomas does use analogy in his view of God and the world. But first we must discuss the last of the three kinds of analogy, proportionality.

Analogy of Proportionality

Proportionality is etymologically a Greek term and was originally used for a mathematical relation of two proportions or fractions. St. Thomas even illustrates it in this manner.⁵ But when it is applied in his writings to theological and philosophical problems it becomes apparent that it has lost all

¹This analysis is taken from Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 242.

²These are by far in the majority. Anderson lists such names as Ramirez, LeRohellec, Penido, Manser, Maritain and Marc. Anderson, op. cit., p. 109.

³See his Commentary of Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 34.

⁴Anderson, op. cit., p. 242.

⁵See Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q12, A1, R4.

quantitative aspects and has taken on a purely metaphysical meaning.

The Definition.-- St. Thomas called this an analogy "according to being and according to intention"¹ because though the analogates are not considered equal in the perfection expressed by the common name nor in the "being" (esse) of this perfection, yet they agree proportionally in both.² So the name and the feature are common to several things according to an agreement of proportion.³ Thus the analogated perfection is present in each of the analogates according to the mode of each's existence.⁴ So that, for example, human intelligence /human mode of existence as divine intelligence/ the divine mode of existence. Both man and God possess "intelligence" intrinsically and formally only in a different way. From this main feature there follow three others.⁵

(1) The analogous character must exist formally in all analogates, not in just one and in ways proper to each. (2) It is not necessary that one analogate be included in the definition of the others. (3) The analogates can be expressed by one concept,⁶ whose unity is imperfect and relative. It is a proportional unity and has objective significance.⁷

¹Notice the definition of the three types by Thomas as they are contrasted from one another: (1) Inequality is "analogy" according to being and not according to intentions. (2) Attribution is analogy "according to intention but not according to being". (3) Proportionality is analogy "according to being and according to intention".

²Cajetan, op. cit., p. 122.

³John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 156.

⁴Vincent E. Smith, "On the Being of Metaphysics," New Scholastic, Vol. XX, (1946), p. 81.

⁵According to John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 160.

⁶Cajetan says, "but in analogy (of proper proportionality) neither (extreme) defines the other, but the definition of one is proportionately the definition of the other". Cajetan, op. cit., p. 54.

⁷It will be noted that these three stand in contrast to those of attribution given above.

The Division.--As St. Thomas says, we may have proportionality in two different ways. (1) The first is an improper proportionality. This would be true, for example, of anything predicated of God metaphorically, as when God is called lion, sun, and the like, because their definition includes matter which cannot be attributed to God. (2) At other times, however, a term predicated of God and creatures implies nothing in its principal meaning which would prevent our finding between a creature and God an agreement. To this kind belong all attributes which include no defect nor depend on matter for their act of existence, for example, being, the good, and similar things.¹ This last kind is called proper proportionality. And the reason metaphorical proportionality (e.g., sight/body : : intellect/soul)² is called "improper" is because "the words that exercise the function of metaphorical analogy are not analogous by virtue of their own meaning (i.e. by their proper imposition) but as an effect or transfer of usage"³ They are only figuratively and not formally analogous.⁴ St. Thomas further differentiates these by distinguishing between the intended signification (primary denotation) of a term and the mode of signification (finite connotations).⁵ The former is attributed to God properly but not the latter.⁶

¹Thomas Aquinas, Truth, translated by Robert W. Mullegan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952), Vol. I, Q2, A11, body.

²John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 157 (Commentary on Nichomachean Ethics, I, 7).

³Ibid.

⁴Cajetan says, "to be predicated in the proper sense means that what the name signifies is found in that of which it is predicated according to its own nature; to be predicated metaphorically means that what the name signifies is found in that of which it is predicated according to likeness only". Cajetan, op. cit., p. 26.

⁵Thomas Aquinas, On the Power of God, translated by English Dominican Fathers (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1952), QA, A3, R1.

⁶So then, "that man is a 'fox'" is metaphorical attribution. "But he is as 'sly'" is a proper analogy because the nature of a fox isn't found intrinsically in a man but "slyness" is found in both man and fox. Anderson, op. cit., p. 171.

The Distinctions.---The nature of proportionality becomes clearer as it is compared to and distinguished from the analogy of attribution. (1) Between improper or metaphorical proportionality and attribution there are several similarities and differences. They are similar in three respects:¹ (a) the common characteristic (or analogon)² is formally present in only one analogate; (b) it is only contingently and improperly present in the other analogates; (c) and knowledge of the proper analogate is prior to knowledge of the others (that is, we must know "health" in an organism before we know it in medicine). Likewise, there are three differences between metaphorical proportionality and the analogy of attribution.³ (2) Attribution is a simple proportion; metaphor is a proportion of proportions, or a proportionality.⁴ (3) Attribution as such is limited to extrinsic relation and logical intention; metaphor is dynamic and bears on the order of real activity.⁵

Between proper proportionality and attribution (or proportion) there are marked differences as well. Four may be noted. (1) Proportion is a direct relation of one thing to another; proportionality is an indirect comparison of two proportions.⁶ (2) Proportion has definite quantitative and mathe-

¹Ibid., p. 176.

²"The term analogon is used as a translation of the Latin neuter analogum and may indicate the analogous term, the analogous notion, and the perfection or form in which the analogates, as such agree". Cajetan, op. cit., p. 30, N2.

³Anderson, op. cit., p. 176.

⁴Simply put, metaphor is a relation of "several to several" and attribution is a relation of "several to one". Ibid., p. 167.

⁵"Metaphorical analogy...consists in the similarity in activity or mode of operation of two or more agents which are diverse in character; so that the analogated character or form is actually present in each of the analogates: in one of them properly and formally, in the others only virtually and therefore improperly." Ibid., p. 177.

⁶Patterson writes: "it appears then that we are not justified in attempting to make any direct comparison between the goodness of man and the goodness of

mathematical connotations--a relation of one quantity to another¹--while proportionality is merely a similarity of proportions without the mathematical and quantitative connotations.² (3) In proportion or attribution only one analogate possesses the perfection intrinsically and the others by denomination from it; in proportionality all the analogates possess it according to their own nature.³ (4) Hence, for proportionality there is only one⁴ concept to represent all the analogates while in proportion there are many.⁵

The Distinctive Analogy.--To this latter type of analogy, proper proportionality, St. Thomas gives special recognition.⁶ It is the metaphysical analogy par excellence. St. Thomas writes of it in contrast to the analogy of

God, since the two are incommensurable, inasmuch as the former is finite while the latter is infinite. But we are justified in asserting that as the goodness of man is to the man, so the goodness of God is to God...." Patterson, op. cit., p. 243.

¹Aquinas, Truth, I, Q2, All, body.

²Cajetan, op. cit., p. 25. See footnote on page 6.

³This attribution is according to priority and posteriority with prime analogate receiving the first.

⁴Cajetan says "...the notion [concept] of the one is the concept of the other taken proportionally". op. cit., p. 58. John of St. Thomas wrote, "an analogue by proper proportionality admits of one concept for all analogates, but this concept is inadequate and imperfect...." op. cit., p. 170. Anderson adds, "it stands for one no more than for another, but for all indifferently, proportionately; just as the term 'principle' does not stand...for one particular principle but any". op. cit., p. 259.

⁵John of St. Thomas explains that in the analogy of attribution "...the analogous concept is directly a univocal one. It is adopted to the expression of other things by a transfer in language. In the mind such a concept...(is) signified by diverse concepts with a connotation of the analogous concept". John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 176.

⁶At least this is true in his earlier writings. Whether or not it alone is necessary for analogical predication of God, or whether it is needed at all will be discussed in Chapter 4. Here it will suffice to say that some Thomists feel that Thomas changed his view from the earlier works by the time he wrote his mature work, the Summa Theologica.

attribution, "...the second kind of analogical predication [i.e. proper proportionality] is applicable to him [God] but not the first [i.e. analogy of attribution]."¹ And again, "...nothing can be predicated analogically of God and creatures according to this type of analogy [attribution]" but "...there is no reason why some name cannot be predicated analogously of God and creature in this manner [i.e. by proper proportionality]."² Cajetan concludes the same saying, "by means of analogy of proper proportionality we know indeed the intrinsic entity...of things, which are not known from the preceding analogy [i.e. attribution]."³ And Anderson says, "...that proper proportionality is the only real metaphysical analogy".⁴

Now that the various kinds of analogy have been differentiated and defined and the metaphysical contribution of analogy to the problem of the One and many has been stated, we may note a few of the epistemological implications of this doctrine before we see how St. Thomas applies it to a knowledge of God.

The Epistemological Implications

St. Thomas never felt the necessity of elaborating his epistemology before he entered a discussion of metaphysics or of theology.⁵ In fact to represent him as doing so is grossly anachronistic. To him both the basic principles of reason and the reality they apprehended were immediately evident.

¹Aquinas, On Power of God, Q7, A7, B.

²Aquinas, Truth, I, Q2, All, B.

³Cajetan, op. cit., p. 28.

⁴Anderson, op. cit., p. 310. See also Phelan, op. cit., p. 39. "The only analogy which is adequate as a metaphysical principle is the analogy of proportionality properly so-called".

⁵Mascall says to require someone to elaborate his epistemology before he can speak about God is like requiring someone to have a detailed knowledge of physiology before he can exercise his body. Mascall, op. cit., p. 45.

It was reality or being which the intellect apprehended and, as we have seen, that "being" was analogical.¹

Implied in our Knowledge of Being

So then, the first implication and intuition² of an analogy of being is that we know being.³

For the eye of the mind, the intellect, as truly sees as do the eyes of the body, and even more profoundly. And what it sees is analogical. The corporeal sense is arrested at the surface of the thing perceived; but the intellect penetrates into the very depth of the object and conceiving with-itself, as in the womb of the spirit, a likeness, sees it as it is there to be seen.⁴

The order of apprehension in this knowledge bears an important relation to the doctrine of analogy. For Thomas, man knows the external world first, then himself, and from the world he knows God.⁵

Knowledge of external World.--Of course, for Thomas the "self" must

¹That is, not equivocal as the illusory being of Heraclitus nor univocal as the solitary being of Parmenides.

²This is an intuition and not a presupposition for Thomas. Gilson has said, some philosophies rest on assumptions. These merely think. Others, as St. Thomas, rest their philosophies on seeing. These know. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, p. 212.

³Since the English term "being" is both ambiguous and important in Thomism a definition is necessary. "being" is used in two ways: (1) denoting existence (an act) and (2) denoting an existent (a thing). In the latter sense "being" is composed of "essence" (that which is what it is or "whatness") and "existence" or "esse" (that which is, is real, or has existence). In the latter case, the English word "being" means a principle of being or existence (viz., act) and is to be distinguished from the other co-principle of being (viz., potency) which is the essence. These two principles are only separable in our mind; they are never separated in reality. When "being" is meant in the sense of "existence" or a principle of being we shall call it, as Thomas generally does, esse.

⁴How this takes place is a temptation to discuss but is beyond the limits of this treatise. We must be content with the fact that, for Thomas, it does take place. The "how?" brings up the doctrines of "abstraction" and "intentionality" which are vast in themselves. Phelan, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵Augustine argued from self to God to the external world.

exist before it can think, but it does not know it is thinking until after it has thought, that is, until after it has apprehended an object in the external world.¹ As he has put it, "the light of our intelligence is not the first object of our understanding but its medium".² So it is the external world of reality that we first know and can never escape. The mind "...never succeeds in stating or coming upon something that is not being. It was on this that St. Thomas founded his doctrine of the analogy of being"³ "Thus does being become the dominating concept in philosophy, the norm of all reflection in the order of nature and the basis of all rational knowledge. And, being as such is intrinsically analogical".⁴

Knowledge of the Self.--Self knowledge assumes no great part in Thomistic analogy. For Thomas, even though

...the human mind reflects the likeness of God more faithfully than creatures of lower degree, yet the knowledge of God that can be gathered from the human mind, does not surpass the knowledge gathered from sensible things; since even the soul knows what itself is through understanding the nature of sensible things.⁵

Nothing is in the intellect which was not first in the senses.⁶ And so we must turn to the sensible world in order to ascend the staircase to the invisible world.

¹St. Thomas says "...even the soul knows what itself is through understanding the nature of sensible things...." Thomas Aquinas, The Summa Contra Gentiles, (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne Limited, 1924), III, 47. See also Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 46 and Summa Theologica, IA, 88, 1 where self knowledge is said to come only through activity.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, IA, 88, 3 ad 1.

³Francesco Olgiati and John S. Zybura, The Key to Study of St. Thomas (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1929), p. 24.

⁴Phelan, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 47.

⁶Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q12, A12.

Knowledge of God.--How is this to be done? We know God from His effects.¹ These effects are manifested in the external world. So from the beings of our experience we infer the Being who is above our experience.

In the order of knowledge, then, our thought is inclosed between two points. At the point of departure we have an initial cognition of being; at the point of arrival we find nothing more than a perfected cognition of this same being [i.e. God]....It was on this that St. Thomas founded his doctrine of the analogy of being.²

The Thomistic mind, then, goes from the apprehension of finite being in the external world to the assertion of an infinite Being beyond the world and upon whom it depends. And the doctrine of analogy is an attempt to explain how this can be done.

Applied in our Knowledge of Infinite Being

Not only is analogy implied in our knowledge of the world but more specifically it is applied in our knowledge of God which we derive from the world.

Knowledge is from Effect to Cause.--It is from the effects of God which we perceive in the beings of our experience that we may know God. St. Thomas writes,

When an effect is better known to us than its cause, from the effect we proceed to the knowledge of the cause. And from every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated, so long as its effects are better known to us; because since every effect depends on its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must preexist. Hence, the existence of God... can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us.³

This, then, implies a similarity of cause to effect or an analogy between God and the creature. So that we may argue from the contingent effects in a changing world to the necessary existence of an unchanging God who is "somehow"⁴

¹Ibid., Q2, A2.

²Olgiati and Zybura, op. cit., p. 24.

³Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Q2, A2, B.

⁴The "somehow" is the via eminentiae of St. Thomas discussed in the next chapter.

like His effects. So that knowledge of God is by an inferential process.¹

Knowledge is Limited.--However, when we know God by this process, it is necessarily an imperfect knowledge which we have.

Our natural knowledge begins from sense. Hence our natural knowledge can go so far as it can be led by sensible things. But our mind cannot be led by sense so far as to see the essence of God; because the sensible effects of God do not equal the power of God as their cause.....

.....
But because they are His effects and depend on their cause, we can be led from them so far as to know of God whether he exists, and to know of Him what necessarily belongs to Him....²

That is, our knowledge of God is only analogous to what He actually is in Himself because it is only derived from His finite effects. And a finite concept can never perfectly describe an infinite being.

Knowledge is by Reason not Faith.--Of course, St. Thomas is speaking of the knowledge of God in this life by the powers of natural reason.³ And in accord with this, Thomas expounds his view of faith and reason. The existence of God is not properly an article of faith but really the preamble to it.⁴ No one truth, even God's existence, may be known by both faith and reason.⁵ But for the sake of the non-philosophical, common man it was fitting that the existence of God be proposed as a thing to be believed.⁶ Although most men do

¹When Mascall denies this, as he apparently does (op. cit., p. 89), he is parting company with St. Thomas. For St. Thomas the word "demonstration" had a technical connotation and was not self-evident. See Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 10-12, and Truth, Q2, A1, R1.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q12, A12, B.

³In the next life, there will be the "beatific vision" when man will see God as He is, but this will be a supernatural event.

⁴Aquinas, Truth, Q14, A9, R9.

⁵Ibid., Q14, A9, body.

⁶St. Thomas lists several reasons for this. Because (1) few men ever attain this "demonstrative" knowledge by reason since they don't have the right disposition, leisure or energy; (2) it takes a long time and a lot of work to

have a "general and confused" knowledge of God¹ by reason though they cannot demonstrate that God exists. But once a man can prove it, he no longer believes it (i.e. accepts it by authority).²

Exactly how we acquire this knowledge of God by reason is the problem of analogy, and how analogy is used in doing it is the subject of the next two chapters.

SUMMARY

The paradox of Heraclitus' "Becoming" and Parmenides' "Being" is resolved by St. Thomas in the doctrine of analogy. Reality is both "being" and "becoming". The basis of this is the distinction between actuality and potentiality or existence and essence on the level of "being". It is an understanding that "being" is not always the same but differs under different conditions, that is, it is analogous. Now there are three basic kinds of analogy differentiated by St. Thomas: (1) inequality, (2) attributions, and (3) proportionality both (a) improper (or metaphorical) and (b) proper (or metaphysical). By this latter kind we know "being" and God. That is, by means of analogy we can arrive at an infinite being from the finite beings we know in the reality of the external world. This process is limited but it does yield an analogical knowledge of God.

arrive at this place, since the truth is profound, all men don't have the background, and they are hindered by youthful passions, and (3) furthermore, there are many falsehoods mingled with human investigations because the mind is weak, philosophers contradict one another, and hence the faithful would be in doubt. Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 4.

¹Ibid., III, 38.

²Aquinas, Truth, A14, A9, R9.

CHAPTER III

THE USE OF ANALOGY TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE

The Sense in Which Analogy is Needed

Exactly how, then, is "analogy" used to bridge the gap from the finite to the infinite in the chain of theistic argumentation? The Thomistic answer is: metaphysically but not epistemologically. That is, it is implied in the actual transition, but there is no need for explicit reference to it.

Implicitly and Metaphysically

From the Thomistic epistemology we may see that analogy is implied in all that we say about God. In fact, "all conscious things implicitly know God in everything they know",¹ says St. Thomas. This may be seen in several different ways.

Analogy is Implied in Causality.--Since our knowledge of God is based on the relation of effect to cause and the cause must bear some likeness to the effect, whenever we argue from effect to cause we are using analogy. Anderson says,

it is analogy which alone makes it possible for us to conclude the existence of a transcendent God by taking our point of departure from sensible things, and it is analogy which alone makes it possible to explain the fact the universe derives its existence from a transcendent principle without being confused with that principle or adding itself to it.²

¹Gilby, Philosophical Texts, p. 215, quoting de Veritate, 2 ad 1.

²Anderson, op. cit., p. 253, N20.

Once the causal connection is seen between God and the world, "we are necessarily led to set up a new relation between effect and cause, the relation, namely, of analogy".¹

Analogy is Implied in "Being".--To look at it from another perspective, the very concept of "being" with which we begin in its finite manifestations and to which we argue in its infinite perfection, that very "being" itself is analogous. In fact it is

by reason of the analogy of being in be-ing that it is possible to demonstrate the existence of God...as the cause...of the being of all that exists. For the very notion of cause is itself an analogical notion and any demonstration of the existence of the cause of being...derives its probative force from the likeness of proportions which must exist between beings which are only by participation and Being which is in its own right.²

So, for St. Thomas, one must proceed from effects to cause in theistic argumentation. And in doing this, he is both using and implying analogy--an analogy which links "beings" with "Being" and "effects" with "Cause". However, this is only an implicit use of analogy. It is merely an argument from the way things are, and things are analogous.

Not Explicitly or Epistemologically

Explicitly, analogy is not really needed at all. St. Thomas is a realist and reality is analogous. So he does not attempt to show why this is so but merely accepts that it is so.

St. Thomas' Intentions.--It seems fairly obvious from the order of procedure adopted by St. Thomas (e.g., he doesn't introduce analogy in Summa Theologica until after he has given proofs for God's existence) that he never

¹Gilson, Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, p. 95.

²Anderson, op. cit., p. 41.

intend^{ed} to make explicit reference to analogy in his theistic epistemology.

In examining this question Lyttkens concludes, "we can thus say that neither in stating his problems, nor in proving them, does he want to introduce analogy in the proper sense".¹ Even so, this does not decide the question as to whether or not Thomas did make explicit recourse to analogy in the proof for God's existence² by concluding that he didn't intend to do so. The question remains: what did he actually do?

St. Thomas Actual Procedure.--What Aquinas actually did cannot be determined until his procedure is examined in full, but we may presently note that he does distinguish clearly between knowing whether God is and knowing what God is. The mere affirmation of existence is not, for him, to have an ontological knowledge of that existence. In this respect he says, "we can know that God is and not what He is".³ To affirm "existence" (esse) of a thing is not to know what kind of existence it has.⁴ This would mean that we may affirm God's existence without explicitly using the principle of analogy needed to know His essence.

So, then, we may tentatively say "...that the question of analogy does not arise at all in the mere proof of the existence of God." That is, even though analogy is implied metaphysically in the transition from effects to cause and from "beings" to "Being", nevertheless, there is no need for explicit

¹Lyttkens, op. cit., p. 41.

²It must be remembered here that we are speaking of analogy only as used to prove God's existence. It is unmistakable that Thomas used it in asserting God's essence. For this latter statement see Mascall, op. cit., p. 96. "It is at this point [i.e., point of showing God's essence] that analogy becomes altogether necessary...."

³Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, A3, Introduction.

⁴Kind of existence" is what St. Thomas means by "essence".

reference to it in his theistic epistemology.¹ He is merely making an affirmation about God's existence and is not claiming an understanding of it. How this is possible remains to be examined.

The Use of Analogy in the "Five Ways"

In this respect, a consideration of St. Thomas' "five ways" for proving God's existence is helpful in understanding the way analogy is implied in his whole procedure. The first fact to consider is the relation of the "five ways" to each other and then to the a posteriori procedure of his arguments. Then the logic of the process must be analyzed with particular respect to the analogous middle term in the syllogism.

An Understanding of the "Five Ways"

St. Thomas says,

The existence of God can be proved in five ways. [1] The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion.... [2] The second way is from the nature of the efficient cause.... [3] The third way is taken from possibility and necessity.... [4] The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things.... [5] The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world.²

Just exactly what St. Thomas means by these five "ways" to prove God's existence has been the subject of some debate even among Thomists. Does he mean five different "proofs" for the one God, or five different "means" of what is really one proof for the one God, or what?

Five "Ways" are Really One Proof.--It seems apparent that in spite of what some Thomists or non-Thomists have thought about this question, that for St. Thomas himself there was only one proof. "In speculative matters," says he, "the medium of demonstration which demonstrates the conclusion perfectly, is

¹Mascall, op. cit., p. 95.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q2, A3.

one only".¹ This is because in any proof it "...is reductively only one, although it may be presented in an indefinite number of different ways".²

The reason behind having only one proof is not difficult to discover. It is because "in the last resort St. Thomas has only one datum for an argument for the existence of God, namely the existence of beings whose existence is not necessitated by their essence; that is, beings in which essence and existence are really distinct".³ And it is this fact that will prove to be the key in answering the next question that arises, viz., which of the five "ways" is this one proof or is it another one?

What is the "One" Proof?--Though it may seem redundant, it is nevertheless necessary to say that, for Thomas, the "one" proof is the one which can be shown in "five different ways". That is to say, it is not any one of the five or another beside, but it is a principle operative in all five. Garrigou-Lagrange has seen this⁴ for he has written:

¹Gilby, Philosophical Texts, p. 56 quoting Aquinas.

²Anderson, op. cit., p. 156.

³Mascall, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴Thomists have given preference to one or the other of these "ways" as the force of the "one" proof behind them seemed clearer to them in one form of the argument rather than the other. But in general Thomists agree that any one of the five states the proof acceptably though the "real" proof may be less apparent in one form than in another. Farrell sums this up saying, "these proofs are not aimed at a cumulative effect, ... they are not the frail threads woven into the strong cloth of a prosecuting attorney's circumstantial argument. From all of them, or from any one of them, the existence of God is established; from any one of them as a starting point, it can be shown that God is existence itself, the perfect being...." Walter Farrell, A Companion to the Summa (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1941), Vol. I, pp. 44, 45.

(1) Charles A. Hart favors the fourth "way" or form of the argument saying, "...it is obvious that the fourth, or so-called henological argument becomes the perfect form of inference because it alone is a clear and immediate expression of the participation principle". Charles A. Hart, "Participation and the Thomistic Five Ways," The Thomist, Vol. 26, (1952), p. 269. Mortimer Adler favors this fourth argument as well. See The Thomist, "The Demonstration of God's Existence", (1943), p. 194, N14.

There is indeed a general proof which is readily understood by the natural reason or the common sense, and which includes confusedly the other proofs. It has its foundation in the principle that is derived from the principle of causality, namely, that the greater and more perfect does not come from the less perfect, but the imperfect comes from the more perfect.... Each of these proofs starts from some established fact (of motion, of conditional causality, of the presence of contingent being, their imperfection, or order in the world), and it ascends to God by the principle of causality and its corollary, namely, that there is no regress to infinity in a series of directly subordinate causes.¹

Gilson states the same thing in this way:

With the exception of the proof from finality, all the others presuppose that the effects on which the argument rest are disposed in a series of more and more perfect causes. This aspect of Thomistic thought, very evident in the fourth, is no less so even in the first, viz., the hierarchic subordination of essentially ordered causes and effects renders an infinite regress in the series of cause impossible and allows reason to assert the existence of God.²

Reason for "Five" Proofs.--This is a matter of speculation since St. Thomas never told us. But he did leave us the information upon which we may base our judgment. As was suggested before, "...the ultimate function of the "Five Ways" is to make it plain, by calling attention to five outstanding features of finite being, what the fundamental characteristic of finite being is. And that fundamental characteristic is a radical inability to account for its own

(2) St. Thomas himself felt that the first mode of the five arguments was the most apparent form of inference calling it the via manifestor. There are many reasons why this one of the "ways" appealed to St. Thomas. (a) Maybe because it was aristotelian in form as vs. platonic. (b) Perhaps because motion is most apparent in man's common sense experience. (c) Possible because it was more generally accepted in his day.

(3) Copelston commenting on St. Thomas' preference says, "However, whatever we may think of this assertion, the fundamental proof is really the third proof or 'way', that from contingency". Copelston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 345.

And whatever we may think of these various emphases, it is obvious that for St. Thomas there was but one proof expressed in five different "ways".

¹Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, The One God, translated by Dom. Bede Rose (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), pp. 138, 139.

²Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 94.

existence",¹ says Mascall. The "five ways", then, "...are not five different demonstrations but five different ways of manifesting the radical dependence of finite being upon God, of declaring...that the very essence of finite being is to be effect-implying-cause".² The number of the "ways" is not so important as the recognition that there are several "ways" to look at "being(s)" and see that there must be a "Being".

Relation of "Five Ways" to "Being".--In point of fact, these "five ways" can be readily expressed in terms of the idea of the function of being.

The being that changes requires the existence of the Being that is, and does not become. The immobile mover is Being in its pure activity.... Contingent being, the being that can exist or not exist...has being, in so far as there is a necessary Being, that is, a Being whose essence is existence. The being that begins to exist, the effect, cannot find within itself the explanation of its existence....Therefore, it owes its being to the supreme cause, to Being that has never begun to exist....Limited and imperfect being, because of its very limitation and imperfection, cannot be Being itself. What is limited does not hold within itself the reason of its being. The finality of beings means existence of a Being that is pure intelligence. In short, all these reasonings are founded on the idea of being. What is more, if we observe well, the very procedure of St. Thomas is always based on that idea.³

In brief, each of the "five ways" begins with an aspect of finite being and concludes with a characteristic of infinite Being. Finite being is considered:

...(1) as subject to change; (2) as caused; (3) as contingent; (4) as composite and imperfect; (5) as multiplicity of design directed to some end. From these he concludes that there is a being which is (1) not moved; (2) not caused; (3) necessary; (4) simple and perfect; (5) directing all things to their proper end....⁴

So each aspect of finite being becomes an attribute of the infinite being

¹Mascall, op. cit., p. 71.

²Ibid.

³Olgiati and Zybura, op. cit., pp. 77, 78.

⁴Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, God: His Existence and His Nature, translated by Dom. Bede Rose (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1934), p. 246.

upon whom it depends.

"Five Ways" Prove Five Attributes of God.--So these five ways, while leading us to the assertion that God is, in the very affirmation tell us something of what God is. "They lead us to five attributes which in fact, are proper to God...."¹ "The point at issue is always the same: the existence of perfection that did not previously exist."² That is, they "...lead immediately to five different truths under the same name of God...."³ Of course it is vain to imagine that these "ways" really prove five different gods because it has been "...pointed out that each of these five demonstrations is to move us to admit the existence of a divine attribute which can be predicated only of the self-subsisting Being [emphasis ours]...."⁴ "These attributes can, in fact, only belong to a being whose essence and existence are identical."⁵ And such a being is one or simple as the the fourth "way" shows.

For St. Thomas, therefore, all five "ways" are really different forms of one implied proof. And this proof is shown in each of the arguments individually though it may be unequally apparent depending on our understanding of the particular aspect of finite being with which it begins.⁶ But basic to all of them is what we might tentatively call the principle of "existential causality"⁷ or

¹Ibid., p. 338.

²Farrell, op. cit., I, 35.

³Gilby, Philosophical Texts, p. 36, NL.

⁴Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 390.

⁵Ibid., p. 338.

⁶"To begin with, each proof rests upon an empirical statement of fact, because an existence can be inferred only by starting from another existence". Gilson, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷This is what Fr. Toner called it. Class notes, University of Detroit, 1957.

"participation".¹ It means that the "here and now" existence of the beings of our experience are existentially dependent upon a Supreme being by a causal participation. It is the principle of "efficient causality"² or "sufficient reason"³ operating on the level of existence. In point of fact, it is this principle upon which analogy is based and from which it is explicated.

The Logical Statement of this Argument.--This basic argument may be put into syllogistic form in several different ways, all of which are basically the same. Garrigou-Lagrange says that the proof will assume the following form:

The world necessarily demands a primary extrinsic cause.
Now we call the primary cause of the world by the name of God;
Therefore, God exists.⁴

Or, more completely it might be stated this way:

There are limited beings in our experience.
These beings are caused to exist by an efficient cause.
Now the existential causality of this cause is either caused or uncaused.
An infinite series of existentially dependent causes is impossible.
Therefore, there is a first, uncaused cause of the limited beings of our experience.⁵

Now the logician will immediately notice that there is something apparently unacceptable, or at least objectionable with the deduction in this syllogism. It has an analogous middle term! The term "cause" is not the same in the conclusion as it is in the premises. The "cause" that the intellect knows in the major premises is a finite cause while the "cause" of the conclusion is an infinite cause, God.

The Use of an Analogous Middle Term

Garrigou-Lagrange admitting that the middle term is analogous writes,

¹This is what Charles A. Hart calls it, op. cit., p. 269.

²See Copleston, op. cit., p. 346.

³See Gilson, op. cit., p. 94.

⁴Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., pp. 224, 225.

⁵Substantially copied from class notes of Fr. Toner, University of Detroit,

"It is an analogical term, which is all that is required. Though analogical, it has sufficient unity, so that the syllogism does not contain four terms."¹ Cajetan shows "...that a concept which has unity of proportions can be the middle term in a syllogism, provided it has the same extension in the major and minor".² St. Thomas himself was fully aware of the analogical character of this middle term and said,

When the existence of a cause is demonstrated from an effect, this effect takes the place of the definition of the cause in the proof of the cause's existence. This is especially the case in regard to God, because, in order to prove the existence of anything, it is necessary to accept as a middle term the meaning of the word, and not its essence, for the question of its existence. Now the names given to God are derived from His effects; consequently, in demonstrating the existence of God from His effects, we may take for the middle term the meaning of the word 'God'.³

This is the same as saying, that he begins only with a "nominal" definition of God's existence. He begins by asking, does such a being as we nominally define as a "Supreme Cause" really exist or is it just a concept? The use of such a procedure "...is not a logical thesis devised to make that demonstration possible; for Aristotle had already laid down the doctrine of the analogical middle term in valid demonstrations".⁴ Cajetan citing Aristotle on this question writes,

Aristotle also the Father of demonstration in II posterior analytics, declares that the analogon is the adequate cause property and must sometimes be assumed by a demonstrator as a middle term, when teaching how to search for causes he says: 'again, another method is to make a selection by analogy. For we cannot find a single identical (name) which can be used as the name of a squid's pounce, a spine and a bone. Nevertheless, certain (properties) flow from it as if one such nature existed.' And in the following chapter he says: 'whatever belongs to the same by analogy

¹Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 225.

²In other words, "cause" must be used in both senses as "that which causes". See Cajetan, op. cit., p. 69.

³Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, A2, A2, R2.

⁴Anderson, op. cit., p. 158, N1.

is the middle by analogy'. In these words he not only taught that the analogon is sometimes used as a middle term in demonstrations, but also states explicitly that it is not one in itself, and that notwithstanding this it has a property corresponding to it as if it had one nature.¹

So, then, while the middle term is analogous, for St. Thomas, the conclusion is not fallacious. The middle term has sufficient unity not to be equivocal and hence does not have two completely different meanings.² And even though, as St. Thomas would contend, there is an infinite difference between a finite "cause" and an infinite "cause", nevertheless, the effects of the latter bear some resemblance to it and can be substituted denotatively as the definition of this cause in the syllogism demonstrating its existence.

The Relation of Analogy to Causality

From the foregoing discussion in general, the importance of the connection between analogy and causality has become increasingly apparent. The only way we can prove that God exists is via His effects. And these effects are in some way analogous to Him. So that analogy is implicit in the causal process by which we prove the existence of God and explicit in the procedure by which we denominate the essence of God. Hence, analogy and causality are closely connected in the Thomistic theodicy. What is this relationship?

Analogy is Based on Causality

The doctrine of analogy is based upon the fact of causality. This is an important conclusion in the understanding of Thomism. For Aquinas, the causal link is the only real link between God and the world. This was manifest

¹Cajetan, op. cit., p. 70.

²Further objections to this will be considered in chapter V. The strict Thomists have attempted to defend the syllogistic formula of this proof, while some Neo-Thomists admit there are four terms in the syllogism but do not rest their case on any "logical" formulization of the argument at all.

in the analysis of the "Five Ways".

Analogy was implied and used by the very proof that enables us to know that God is. Now analogy must be explicitly utilized in order to show what God is. And a discussion of the fact and kind of causality as the basis of the doctrine of analogy is necessary in order to understand the proper use of analogy from its implications in the demonstration for God's existence to its application in the denomination of God's essence.

Cause-Effect Relation Basic to all Proofs.--There is no other way of ascent to a knowledge of God than via the cause-effect relation. All we know are sensible and finite things. All these things are the effects of God. There is no doubt a real relationship here with the doctrine of creation in St. Thomas.¹ And in this sense Romans 1:20 became the basic text of scholasticism.² To create is to cause something to exist which did not previously³ exist. That is to make something from nothing (creation ex nihilo)⁴. To put it in his own words,

...everything that, in any way whatever is, must needs be from that to which nothing is the cause of being. Now we have proved above that God is this being to which nothing is the cause of its being. Therefore, from Him is everything that in any way whatever, is.⁵

Therefore, behind the analogy of creation to the creator is this principle of causality.

Causality is Based in "Being".--And this very

¹Casserley says, "St. Thomas bases his belief in the possibility of the way of affirmation on the doctrine of creation". Casserley, op. cit., p. 51.

²Gilson, Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, p. 72.

³"Previous" here is logical not chronological. St. Thomas held that it was rationally possible to have an eternal creation but revelationally untrue.

⁴"The concept of creation is reducible to the concept of being. For in the mind of St. Thomas, to create is to make something out of nothing...." Olgiate and Zyburra, op. cit., p. 87.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, II, 15.

likeness of creatures to God is not affirmed on account of agreement in form according to the formality of the same genus or species, but solely according to analogy, inasmuch as God is essentially being, whereas other things are beings by participation.¹

With this Thomas signifies his contention that "being" is that ultimate root of causality.² It is only in man of all finite beings that "being" "...attains consciousness of itself. That is the foundation of all legitimate anthropomorphism, and in this we may find the ultimate justification of the medieval conception of causality".³ So causality is interpreted as "a gift of being", and from this "...we are necessarily led to set up a new relation between effect and cause, the relation, namely, of analogy".⁴

Consequently, the concept of analogy is based on the fact of the analogy of being. To put it in reverse, "Being" causes the "be-ing" (or existence) of many things (existents). So that the very "be-ing" of these "beings" bears a resemblance to "Being" insofar as it is a "being" and is "be-ing". That is, the "beings" participate in the likeness of the "Being" by their "be-ing" a "being".

Analogy is Based on Causality.--To say this another way is to show that "...the being that causes does nothing but communicate itself to the effect, [and] then it is still the cause that is found in the effect...."⁵

And the connection between cause and effect is "...the only link enabling

¹Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q4, A3, R3.

²Gilson, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, p. 86.

³Ibid., p. 88.

⁴Ibid., p. 95. He further remarks, "this consequence seemed so obvious to the medieval philosophers that they felt no need at all to justify it; to them it seemed to be a fact given in the most ordinary and everyday experience".

⁵Ibid., p. 95.

us to make an accurate ascent from creature to Creator. This relationship St. Thomas calls analogy....¹ "Hence," as St. Thomas himself puts it, "whatever is said of God and creatures is said according as there is some relation of the creature to God as to its principle and cause, wherein all the perfections of things pre-exist excellently".² "The foundation of all analogy, then, that which makes analogical predication possible, is the likeness of creatures to God,³ namely that of causality.

Therefore, once causality is seen to be the basic connection between "beings" and "Being" or between the world and God, then it may be concluded that God is in some way like the world. That is, the analogy between God and the world is based on the causal relationship sustained between them.

It is Dependent Upon "Efficient Causality"

But what kind of causality is this upon which analogy is based? Is it the exemplar causality of the neo-platonists or the efficient causality of Aristotle or what? Obviously, it cannot be either (as such) for neither possessed the analogy of being which was St. Thomas' unique contribution to the history of this problem.⁴ Plotinus' analogy or exemplar causality was pantheistic, and for Aristotle there existed no efficient causality between God and the world, only final causality.⁵

¹Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 106.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q13, A5.

³Copleston, op. cit., II, p. 355.

⁴See discussion in chapter 2.

⁵The scholastics following Aristotle distinguished four or five kinds of causes. (1) Efficient cause: that by which a thing exists (producer). (2) Final cause: that for which a thing exists (purpose). (3) Formal cause: that of which a thing exists (structure). (4) Material cause: that in which a thing exists (product). (5) Exemplar cause: that after which a thing exists (pattern).

It Differs From Plotinus' Exemplar Causality.---It will be remembered that for Plotinus there was a participation of creatures in the very substance of the Creator.¹ The likeness of the cause was emanated into the very nature of the effect. So that the creature was a participation in the being of God. And the degree of perfection the creature possessed was not in its own being but in the One Being. Among creatures there was an unequal participation in the one common essence or being of God or an analogy of inequality.

Now St. Thomas' doctrine of creation spared him from propounding this error. For Aquinas, each creature has its own act of existence which is distinguished from God's act of existence.² And yet in some way it resembles God; it is analogous by the analogy of being. God is the exemplar of all beings but all beings do not exemplify Him by being "part" of Him but by their "parts" (viz., essence and existence) being similar to Him by an analogy of proper proportionality.³

It Differs From Aristotle's Efficient Causality.---Thomas' doctrine of "participation" or "efficient causality" or "existential causality" is likewise not the efficient causality that Aristotle proposed. For Aristotle never proposed that God was the efficient cause of the world but the final cause.

His doctrine of analogy was primarily logical and not ontological.⁴ Furthermore, there are at least two un-aristotelian elements in the fourth "way"⁵

¹See chapter 1.

²Olgianti and Zyburra, op. cit., p. 71.

³See end of chapter 2.

⁴See chapter 1.

⁵This "fourth way" universally admitted among Thomists to be the most Platonic element in St. Thomas. Copleston says, "the argument is Platonic in origin and presupposes the idea of participation". op. cit., II, p. 344.

as Thomas uses it. (1) It argues to a preexisting cause of the world's reality and is therefore inconsistent with Aristotle's denial of this in his doctrine of the eternity of motion.¹ (2) It is based on the idea of a preexisting exemplar which for Aristotle could only be the abhorred universals of Plato.²

In reality, it is the idea of efficient causality borrowed from Aristotle, perfected by the Platonic exemplar, and applied to the connection between God and the world (which St. Thomas knew as "creation") which becomes the basis of the newly discovered doctrine of analogy in St. Thomas.

It is Both Efficient and Exemplar Causality.--For this is would appear that the Thomistic doctrine is both Platonic and Aristotelian but essentially neither. As Mascall points out, it is not where St. Thomas got his material but what he did with it that is important.³ Actually, it is St. Thomas' own unique contribution and discovery. As a matter of historical fact, Thomas was probably using Plato to correct Aristotle.⁴ But the extent of his debt to Plato is a matter of dispute.⁵ Gilson is probably as close to the truth as any when he declares that the five ways are platonic

...to the extent to which St. Thomas had borrowed from the platonic philosophy his conception of a participation of things in God by resemblance. It was

¹Little says, "whether therefore St. Thomas did or did not derive the fourth way from suggestions in Aristotle, his argument is in fact platonic and un-aristotelian in its two main principles of proof, causality in general, and exemplarity in particular". Little, op. cit., p. 74.

²Ibid.

³Mascall, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴Some Thomists have been reluctant to admit this although others have pointed it out, e.g., Little, op. cit., p. 232. St. Thomas himself no doubt would be hesitant to admit his debt to Plato lest he give support to his Platonic enemies who constantly opposed his Aristotelian synthesis of philosophy and theology.

⁵Charles A. Hart feels that all five arguments are completely indebted to the Platonic principle of participation and are invalid without it. Hart, op. cit., p. 157 ff. and p. 275.

this that led him to consider the universe as hierarchially ordered according to different possible degrees of finite participation in the causality of the cause....¹

However, Arthur Little seems to go a little too far when he considers exemplar causality alone sufficient to prove God's existence and efficient causality sufficient only if it is based on exemplar causality.² For with the exception of the fourth "way" it is manifest that the other arguments explicitly utilize the principle of efficient causality. And even the fourth argument uses it but needs exemplar causality to complete it.

In other words, it seems more probable that St. Thomas only uses efficient causality (applied on the level of being of course) to demonstrate the existence of God but implied in this efficient causality is the similarity of effect to cause which is an "exemplar" element in the efficient cause. And it is this element which enables St. Thomas to describe the essence of God. But this exemplar element is part of the very nature of an efficient cause as such. The reason for this is that an effect must be like (analogous to) its cause in some way because "a cause cannot give what it hasn't got".³ Even God can't produce what He doesn't in some way possess.⁴ So what is discovered in the creature can be rightly denominated of the Creator.

SUMMARY

St. Thomas does not make any explicit reference to the doctrine of analogy in his epistemological elaboration of the five ways (except nominally)

¹Gilson, op. cit., p. 92.

²Little, op. cit., p. 64 ff.

³Class notes from Fr. Toner, University of Detroit, 1957.

⁴The cause may possess the perfections of the effect in two ways: formally or virtually. The latter applies to God and creature and is involved in the via eminentia to be discussed in the next chapter.

to prove God's existence (in the definition of the middle term) though actually and metaphysically analogy is implied in the principle of causality. And it is this causality which is seen to be the basis of each of the "five ways" and which constitutes them one proof. For Thomas, this is efficient causality applied on the level of being (which enables him to prove God's existence) with an element of "participation" or exemplar causality (which enables him to know God's essence) in it. So that the doctrine of analogy which he later used to name God's essence is based on and explicated from the principle of causality by which he has proved God's existence.

CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF ANALOGY TO KNOW GOD'S ESSENCE

When we turn from the question of God's existence to the question of His essence, we are immediately struck with an apparent paradox in St. Thomas. He has demonstrated that God is by the use of the principle of causality (which in itself implies analogy), and yet he also asserts that "...we cannot know what God is, but rather what He is not".¹ And again, "now it is evident that the divine essence cannot be known through the nature of material things".² Or further, "in no sense is God said to be like a creature".³ Now these do indeed seem strange when they are lined up next to statements such as "all names of this kind signify the divine substance",⁴ or "for demonstration proves that God is immovable, eternal, incorporeal, utterly simple, one, and the like..."⁵ and "we know God from creatures".⁶ How does St. Thomas fit these together?

The Possibility of Knowing God's Essence

Once the existence of God has been shown, the question of His essence immediately follows. For "when the existence of a thing has been ascertained

¹Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q3, Introduction.

²Ibid., I, Q12, 11, body.

³Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A7, R3.

⁴Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, A13, A2.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 39.

⁶Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q13, A1.

there remains the further question of the manner of its existence, in order that we may know its essence".¹ But can we know the essence (or mode of existence) of God?²

It Would Seem That

It would seem that man cannot know God's essence when due consideration is given to what St. Thomas said about this subject. His strong emphasis on the negative knowledge ("we know only what God is not"), the statement that "God is in no sense like creatures" (when for him they are our only source of a natural knowledge of God), and his epistemology (which asserts, "it is evident that the divine essence cannot be known through the nature of material things")--all these would seem to say, No!, we cannot possibly know the essence of God.

Emphasis on Negative Knowledge.--In the tradition of his medieval predecessors, Thomas lays emphasis on the ineffability of God. The remotion of God from creatures, or via negation as it is called, is a matter of accepted fact. Pseudo-Dionysius had emphasized it before Thomas in the Christian tradition and Rabbi Moses Maimonides (one of Thomas' chief opponents) had carried it to extremes in Jewish theology.³

To Thomas it was

...clear that whatever our intellect conceives of God falls short of being a representation of Him. Consequently, the quiddity of God Himself remains forever hidden from us. The most we can know of God during our present life is that He transcends everything that we can conceive of Him....⁴

¹Ibid., I, Q3, Introduction.

²This question will be treated under the familiar Thomistic dialectic of "It Would Seem That", "On the Contrary", and "I Answer That". Lest the reader be puzzled, they mean respectively (in this context), arguments that would seem to indicate that we can't know God's essence, reasons that would oppose these, and a reconciliation of them.

³See Moses Maimonides, A Guide for the Perplexed, translated by M. Friedlander, 2nd edition (Dover Publications, Inc., 1904) chapter 1, 5 and 26.

⁴Aquinas, Truth, Q2, A1, R9.

The reason for this is that

...divine essence surpasses our intelligence and is unknown to us: wherefore man reaches the highest point of his knowledge about God when he knows that he knows Him not....¹

So, then, we know what God is not and not what He is. We do not know His essence or "whatness".

The Creator is not Like the Creature.--To emphasize the same thing in another way, St. Thomas has pointed out that

God can in no way be said to be similar to creatures, but creatures can be said to be similar to Him in some sense....The opposite, however, is not true; for a man is not said to be similar to his image but vice versa².... Thus we say that the statue of Hercules is like Hercules, but not the other way about; for it cannot be said that Hercules has the form of the statue, but only that the statue has the form of Hercules. In this way creatures are said to be similar and conformed to God but not God to creatures.³

Now it would seem to follow from this that God cannot be known since all St. Thomas permits for our knowledge of God is the channel of the creature.⁴ But if we can't say that God is in some way like a creature, then it would seem that we can't say anything about God.

Thomas' Epistemology Seemingly Forbids Knowledge of God's Essence.-- Furthermore, "...when we have a proper knowledge of a thing by negations, we know that it is distinct from others, but remain ignorant of what it is. Such is the proper knowledge of God, that can be obtained by demonstration".⁵

For that which is proper to a higher nature cannot be acquired by a lower nature, except through the action of the higher nature to whom it properly belongs....Therefore, no intellectual substance can see God in the divine

¹Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A5, R14.

²Aquinas, Truth, I, Q2, A11, R1.

³Ibid., Q23, A7, R11.

⁴St. Thomas says, "...all our knowledge of God is taken from creatures...." Summa Theologica, Q7, A7.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 39.

essence, unless God Himself brings this about....Moreover, whatever exceeds the limits of a nature cannot be acquired by that nature except through the agency of another: thus water does not flow upwards unless it is moved by something else. Now it is beyond the limits of any created nature to see God's substance....Therefore, no created intellect can possibly attain to a vision of the divine substance except by the agency of God who surpasses all creatures.¹

The reason for this is plain enough: "...our soul as long as we live in this life, has its being in corporeal matter....Now it is evident that the divine essence cannot be known through the nature of material things".² Because

"Nothing comprehended goes beyond the limits of the comprehender. Consequently, if the created intellect were to comprehend the divine substance, this would not exceed the limits of the created intellect; which is impossible. Therefore the created intellect cannot possibly comprehend the divine substance."³

Since all our concepts and our mode of conception are finite we can't possibly conceive of the infinite essence of God. Would this not, then, leave us in a theistic agnosticism? Evidently St. Thomas did not think so.

On the Contrary

On the contrary, it appears that Thomas would bequeath to us a very substantial knowledge of God's essence. In the Summa Theologica he answers in the affirmative the question as to whether or not "names are predicated of God's substance".⁴ Everywhere in his writings he attributes many things to God. He even goes so far as to assert that the finite can know the infinite.⁵

¹Ibid., III, 52.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q12, A11, body.

³Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 55.

⁴Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Q13, A2.

⁵Anderson, op. cit., pp. 350, 351 (Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard.).

The Fact of Substantial¹ Predication.--St. Thomas everywhere implies and many times repeats the fact that God may be seen in His effects. In fact, says he, "it belongs to God's perfections that He bestows His likeness on created things".² And it is "because God confers upon all things all their perfections, [that] we are able to discover in all things their resemblance and unlikeness to God".³

"Therefore, since God is the first mover and moves all other things toward their perfections, all perfections found in things must pre-exist in Him super-abundantly".⁴ So, for Thomas, we may assert many things of God's nature because of the basic relationship and similarity between effect and cause.

The Use of Substantial Attribution.--Furthermore, in the application of this principle, St. Thomas comes up with quite a substantial list of attributes for God. "For demonstration proves that God is immovable, eternal, incorporeal, utterly simple, one, and the like...."⁵

Now admittedly, "these attributes do not differ as regards the reality which is signified", writes Aquinas, "but only in our manner of understanding them. For God's essence, life, knowledge, and whatever else of any sort that may be predicated of Him are all the same; but in understanding [them]...our

¹The words "essence", "substance", "nature" and "quiddity" all refer to the same thing in Thomistic thought but indicate different relationships. (1) "Substance" is a thing insofar as it supports certain accidents or characteristics which accrue to it. (2) "Essence" is that which is what it is as distinct from "existence". (3) "Nature" is the essence in relation to operation and activity. (4) "Quiddity" is the essence as known by a mind. From Fr. Hitter's class notes at the University of Detroit, 1956.

²Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, II, 30.

³Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 109.

⁴Aquinas, Compendium of Theology, chapter 21.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 39.

intellect has different concepts for each".¹ But for Thomas, "...when knowledge is attributed to God, it signifies something which is in Him".² They are actually asserted of God's essence.

Attributes are Only Analogous.--Of course all that we know of God is analogous and not univocal and certainly not equivocal. Because, with reference to the latter, "the use of equivocal terms breaks the continuity of an argument. Therefore, ...no argument could be made by proceeding to God from creatures, whereas the contrary is evidenced by all who speak of divine things".³ And with reference to the former, "univocal predication is impossible between God and creatures," writes Aquinas, because "the likeness of creature to God is imperfect, for it does not represent one and the same generic thing".⁴ But in spite of this, Thomas would carry this analogy to the extent where it enables even finite man to apprehend the infinite God. He writes,

but sometimes the knowability of a thing is more than the mind has the power to grasp, as happens in our knowledge of God....So the knower and the thing known are in no way proportionate. But here we can have proportionality only, that is to say, as knower is to the thing to be known, so is the knowable to what is known, and this proportionality enables the finite to know the infinite....⁵

The analogous knowledge we have of God from His effects even makes it possible for us to know something of the infinite essence of God since all our knowledge of God is a knowledge of what He is.

The antinomy in Thomas can now be clearly seen; we cannot know God's essence and yet we do know God's essence. Is there a solution?

¹Aquinas, Truth, Q2, A1, body.

²Ibid.

³Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 33.

⁴Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Q13, A5.

⁵W. E. Byles, "Analogy of Being", New Scholastic (from Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard).

I Answer That

St. Thomas would lead us with his 'via negation' to believe that we may know nothing of God's essence in this life. And yet with his via analogy he himself has asserted many attributes of God's essence. Is not this a contradiction? "I answer that" it is not when the various texts are seen in their proper contexts.

For St. Thomas there is a clearcut distinction between conceptual and judgmental knowledge of God. Since we have only finite concepts of finite things we can't possibly have an infinite concept of the essence of God. On the other hand, because God is the cause of all finite things, and since a cause must bear some resemblance to its effect, we may affirm many things of the infinite essence. Such is a true knowledge.

Difference Between Quidditative Knowledge and Substantial Attribution.---

For St. Thomas there is a vast difference between saying "we cannot know what God is" and "we can say many things of God". Mascall calls it an agnosticism of concept but not of judgment, saying, "analogy does not enable us to conceive God's goodness as identical with His essence but to affirm it as identical with his existence. Hence, all of our assertions about God are grossly inadequate insofar as they apply concepts to Him, but they are thoroughly adequate insofar as they affirm perfections of Him.¹ And Gilson holds the same view when he writes, "what St. Thomas calls our knowledge of God consists in the last analysis in our ability to form valid affirmative propositions about Him".²

However, some Thomistic commentators, while admitting the distinction between an affirmation and a concept, which Thomas obviously makes, have not

¹Mascall, op. cit., p. 120.

²Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 108.

wished to empty the concept of all positive content in our knowledge of God. Such, as Garrigou-Lagrange, assert that "without perceiving Him as He is in Himself, we truly see God Himself by our mental act".¹ And hence, "we cannot affirm that these primary notions are insufficient in themselves to enable us to acquire some positive knowledge of God, if He exists".²

Even so this positive and analogical knowledge is not a "quidditative perception"³ of what properly constitutes the Deity.⁴ Maritain seems to hold the same conclusion when he says:

Much more, when we know God by means of created perfections...do we know the divine essence, not certainly in itself,...but very truly and very certainly, by virtue of analogy which, while being wholly uncircumscriptive, attains to what is rightly and intrinsically found in that essence....⁵

St. Thomas himself certainly distinguished between what we can affirm of God and what we can conceive of Him. But whether or not he admitted a "positive" element⁶ in our concept of God or only in our affirmation is of little consequence.

¹Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 442.

²Ibid., p. 218.

³"...there was some difference of opinion on this point between the Scotists and the early Thomists. Scotus and his school admitted that we can acquire a natural knowledge of the divine essence by reasoning, whereas the Thomists denied this and maintained that we cannot know naturally what God is (quid est), but only that He is (quia est), and what He is not (quid non est). However, as Cajetan observes,...the difference between the two schools is merely a matter of words. "We must distinguish," he writes, "between knowing an essence (cognoscere quidditatem) and knowing it quidditatively (cognoscere quidditative). To know an essence it suffices to apprehend all its essential predicates, down to the ultimate difference. On the basis of this distinction it must be affirmed that we can acquire a natural knowledge of the divine essence by reasoning, and that is what Scotus meant; but we cannot know the divine essence according to its quiddity, and this is what the early Thomists had in mind." Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 228.

⁴Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 228.

⁵Jaques Maritain, Degrees of Knowledge, translated by Bernard Wall (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. 283.

⁶Gilson feels that Thomistic commentators have gradually put this "posi-

For even though in the mind of Thomas, all concepts of God are valid only if reduced ultimately to judgments--even if he thought this--he nevertheless spoke of concepts as valid knowledge and apparently had some basis for this.¹ The important things are: (1) "our intellect can understand the whole of God but not wholly,"² and (2) God is one but man must know Him through many concepts.

Knowledge of the One God is by Many Concepts.--The reason that we cannot know God's essence is because we cannot form any one sensory image of an infinite substance. "What finite concept can show us the infinite God as He is in Himself?"³ This is why, when we speak of God, we must apply many names to Him for no one finite name can perfectly describe an infinite essence. As Aquinas puts it,

...since God infinitely exceeds the power of our intellect, any form we conceive cannot completely represent the divine essence, but merely has in some small measure an imitation of it....Hence, all different things imitate God in different ways; and, according to different forms, they represent the one simple form of God, since in His form are found perfectly united all the perfections that are found, distinct and multiple, among creatures.⁴

This is the same as saying that God "...is one in reality and many things logically".⁵

But even though these many names coalesce in the simple substance of God, they are nevertheless not synonymous. For

...in understanding essence, life, and so forth in His regard, our intellect has different concepts for each. This does not mean that these concepts are false; for our intellectual conceptions are true inasmuch as they actually

tive" element into the concept from the judgment where St. Thomas had it. Gilson, op. cit., pp. 105, 106.

¹Thomas writes, "wherefore our understanding is neither false nor vain in conceiving many things of one [viz., God]". Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 35. See also op. cit., I, 36.

²Aquinas, Truth, Q2, A1, R3.

³Farrell, op. cit., I, 86.

⁴Aquinas, Truth, Q2, A1, body.

⁵Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A6, body.

represent the thing known by a certain process of assimilation. Otherwise they would be false, that is, if they corresponded to nothing.¹

Even so, our concepts do correspond to something in God though imperfectly and analogously. But to know His essence wholly and as a unity eludes us. It is ineffable.

Via Eminence.--The "whatness" of God in Himself is beyond us in its mode of existence and hence, we must never say that "God is like a creature 'because' likeness is not reciprocated between cause and effect, but only in coordinates".² God isn't on the same level with creatures. Hence, "...it is more fitting to say that a creature is like God than vice versa".³ After all, God was not patterned after the creature but the creature was patterned after Him.⁴ Consequently when we do apply to God the perfections found in creatures (i.e., when we say God is "like" creatures), we must do it supereminently remembering there is no reciprocity of likeness on the generic level between them. God is in some way like creatures but is in another way infinitely different from them.⁵

The charge of contradiction, then, in the Thomistic texts is only apparent. We may not charge him with teaching agnosticism of the divine essence when we understand the distinctions he makes between what God is in Himself⁶ and what

¹Aquinas, Truth, Q2, A1, body.

²Ibid.

³Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 29.

⁴Thomas is asserting that metaphysically and properly God is not a participation in the likeness of the creature in any sense. But, at the same time, He is not denying that epistemologically and predicatively God may be said, in some sense, to be like the creature.

⁵To this St. Thomas sees the parallel in Holy Scripture which "...sometimes recalls the likeness between Him and His creatures, as when it is said (Gen. 1:26) 'Let us make man to our image and likeness' while sometimes this likeness is denied, according to the words of Isa. 40:18: 'To whom then have you likened God; or what image will you make for Him?' and of the Psalm: 'O God, who shall be like to thee?'" Aquinas, op. cit., I, 29.

⁶This, for Thomas, will take place in the Beatific Vision when we have an unmediated knowledge of God Himself. See Summa Theologica, I, Q12, A2, body.

we may know about God by analogy.

The Procedure of Showing God's Essence

For Thomas, we have concluded, it is possible to know the essence of God though not completely. We know that God is such and such in Himself, but have not yet discovered how this is possible. It remains for us to discuss the method of substantial predication.

Thomas formulated his position between two extremes: Maimonides' equivocalism and Scotus' univocalism. The former claimed that we have only an equivocal knowledge of God and the latter contended that our knowledge is univocal. Thomas denied the extremes of each and defended a mean between both, viz., analogy based on causality and being.

However, it would seem that Thomas could not establish this procedure of arguing from effect to cause for several reasons. (1) Maimonides accepted the causal relationship and came up with only a negative knowledge of God. (2) Thomas accepts negative knowledge of God himself. (3) Furthermore, Thomas in ascribing attributes to God was using the "univocal" element he denied to Scotus.

Maimonides' Negativism.--St. Thomas always spoke with respect of the views of this great Spanish Rabbi.¹ Summing up Maimonides' view he writes:

...some have maintained, and Rabbi Moses most emphatically, that these terms when predicated of God do not signify the divine essence. He says in effect that these expressions are to be taken in reference to God in two ways. First as indicating a likeness of effect; and that God is said to be wise, not that wisdom is something in him, but because in his effects he acts like a wise man....Secondly, by way of negation: so that when we say God lives we do not mean that life is something in him, but that God has not that mode of existence which is in things inanimate.²

Thus we may not say that the cause in itself is like its effect but that it acts like what we know as its effect.

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 208.

²Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A5, body.

That is, there is a distinction between "essence" and "attributes" in God. For, to Maimonides, "...it is a self-evident truth that the attribute is not inherent in the object to which it is ascribed, but is superadded to its essence, and is consequently an accident".¹ Therefore, to say God is "wise" because He causes wisdom is merely to ascribe an accident to Him and does not denote His essence at all. It would seem, then, that causality is no basis for a positive knowledge of God's essence but leaves us only with a negative understanding of God.

Thomas Accepts Negativism.--Furthermore, Thomas himself accepts the via negation with reference to God. It would seem, then, that upon his own principles he would be left with no positive knowledge of the deity. He expressly asserts that "we are able to grasp not what God is but what He is not".² Hence, by his own principle, with which he is apparently inconsistent, would he land in the camp of his enemy.

In this way, then, all of the attributions of God would be merely nominal concepts devoid of any real content when applied to the Infinite One. This, admittedly, Thomas did not wish to do, but would not his via negation logically drive him to it?

The Rejection of the Univocal Element.--The only escape from this agnostic negativism would seem to be to admit there is a "univocal" element between God and creatures. But besides being inconsistent with his negativism, this would be for St. Thomas a concession to the Scotistic univocity of being which he opposed so vigorously. St. Thomas speaks for himself:

I answer that it is impossible for anything to be predicated univocally of God and a creature: this is made plain as follows. Every effect of an

¹Maimonides, op. cit., p. 68 ff.

²Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 30.

univocal agent is adequate to the agents power: and no creature being finite, can be adequate to the power of the first agent which is infinite.¹

This is further true because "...in all univocal predications the nature signified by the name is common to those of whom the univocal predication is made. Hence,...the subjects of univocal predication are equal...."² St. Thomas does not wish to have any univocal cause nor a univocal element in the causal process. And this would seem to be his only hope in order to give positive perfections to God.

On The Contrary

But there is another side to this picture. St. Thomas does not draw such conclusions. Nor apparently does he think they are warranted. In fact, to the very contrary he emphasizes that we have a knowledge of God in three ways. One is of course the via negation. Another is the via causality, and the last is the way of eminence.³ In these three do we see the positive desire of Aquinas to affirm a substantial knowledge of God.

Via Negation.--For Thomas the via negation is not the negation of all positive perfections to God but the denial of any imperfection in Him.

Moreover the idea of negation is always based on an affirmation; as is evidenced by the fact that every negative proposition is proved by an affirmative: wherefore unless the human mind knew something positive about God, it would be unable to deny anything about him.⁴

So Thomas' "...negative theology does not assert negations of God; it merely denies limitations of Him".⁵

¹Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A7, body.

²Aquinas, Truth, I, Q2, All, body.

³Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A5, body.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Austin M. Farrer, Finite and Infinite (London: The Westminster Press, 1943), p. 60.

Via Eminence.--Connected with the fact that we must negate certain imperfections from God is the idea that when a given attribute is affirmed of God, it is done so only supereminently. For when all imperfections are removed, that which remains is above anything we know as such for we know only imperfect and limited things. As St. Thomas puts it:

...since every perfection of creatures is to be found in God, albiet in another and more eminent way, whatever terms denote perfections absolutely and without any defect whatever, are predicated of God and other things; for instance, goodness, wisdom, and so forth. But any term that denotes such like perfections together with a mode proper to creatures, cannot be said of God except by similitude and metaphor....¹

The reason that application is only by eminence to God is that the infinite mode of existence is above us. Thus one must apply only the things signified and not the (limited) mode of signification to God.² There is a denotative perfection appropriately applied to God, but there are connotative imperfections which must be denied of Him.

Via Causality.--The third way of theistic knowledge is the essential one and forms the basis of the other two. Since God is the cause of creatures there must be some perfections applicable to both. But since God is the Un-caused cause, these perfections cannot be applied to Him as to a finite cause (for all of them are caused too) but supereminently and only when all imperfections are negated from them. There must needs be some likeness between cause and effect "because it is of the nature of action that a like agent should produce a like action, since everything acts according as it is in act. Wherefore the form of the effect is found in its transcendent cause somewhat...."³

¹Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 30.

²This is why we can call God "wise" but not a "stone" in the proper sense. "For formally considered the character of a stone, no matter how purified, includes some imperfection, which prevents the character...from being found in God, except metaphorically...." Cajetan, op. cit., p. 71.

³Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 29.

So then, God is the equivocal cause of all creatures since "it is precisely as equivocal cause that God contains the effects. He creates [them]... We know that they are in Him but we do not know how".¹

But to say that God is the cause of a given perfection, goodness, for example, is not to say all that God is. "The true sense of the expression is that what we call goodness in creatures we call goodness in the creature pre-exists in God, and in a much higher degree."² God as efficient cause of all things is also the Supreme exemplar cause in which all things participate by an analogical likeness.

I Answer That

Now on the one hand it would seem impossible that Thomas could vindicate his procedure of acquiring a substantial and positive knowledge of God because of his own via negation and because the conclusion Maimonides draws from that same premis is agnosticism. But on the contrary, Thomas does affirm many positive perfections of God on a three-fold basis: negation, eminence, and causality. On what grounds may he do so and maintain consistency?

"I answer that" it is only possible because between God and creatures there is a causal and analogous relationship. This solution may be viewed as a metaphysical "mean" which evades the horns of the apparent dilemma in which he would seem to be snared.

Analogy is Based in Cause-Effect Relation.--The only reason we may affirm anything of God is that we find diffused in His creation some similarity to Him. As Byles has put it: "...these perfections, radiated by the Lamp of Eternal Splendor, must pre-exist in God before radiation, though it is in the creature

¹Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 105.

²Ibid., p. 109.

that the radiated perfection is first known to us".¹

For since every agent...acts according to the manner of its form, the effect must in some way resemble the form of the agent....Therefore if there is an agent not contained in any genus, its effects will still more distantly reproduce the form of the agent, not, that is, so as to participate in the likeness of the agent's form according to the same specific or generic formality, but only according to some sort of analogy; as existence is common to all. In this way all created things, so far as they are beings, are like God as the first and universal principle of all being.²

So that while "...our intellect is unable to grasp His essence as it is in itself, we [can] rise to a knowledge of that essence from the things that surround us.

Various perfections are discerned in these things, the root and origin of them all being one in God...."³ In this way, for example, "...we are able to gather the wisdom of God from the consideration of His works, since by a kind of communication of His likeness it is spread abroad in the things He has made".⁴

It is true that Aquinas maintained that "from effects not proportionate to the cause no perfect knowledge of that cause can be obtained".⁵ And, consequently, that "from every effect the existence of the cause can be clearly demonstrated...though from them we cannot perfectly know God as He is in His essence".⁶ But once we have established that God is we have also, at the same time demonstrated something of what He is both explicitly and implicitly.

As was noted before, each of the "five ways" is aimed at the proof of a different attribute in God. They aim to prove the existence of a certain kind of

¹Byles, op. cit., p. 340.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q4, A3, body.

³Aquinas, Compendium of Theology, chapter 24.

⁴Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, II, 2.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q2, A2, R3.

⁶Ibid.

God. Furthermore, once the existence of God is shown His substantial attributes may be deduced from the kind of existence He is shown to have. "They are rigid deductions, implications from an established fact. And implication, here, is to be taken in its full strong sense, the sense of being contained, wrapped up in what has previously been established."¹

Now there are two other things to be said in this connection. The use of this causal relationship avoids "negativism" and presupposes a formal-virtual distinction.

(1) The negativism of Thomas was not the same as that of Maimonides. "St. Thomas uses the phrases of the negative theology of Maimonides and the mystical writers, but surpasses its findings through the sustained application of analogy."² And "by calling attention to the truth that every negation implies an affirmation, and that unless we know something of God we could deny nothing of Him, St. Thomas has laid bare the fundamental inconsistency of Maimonides' position".³ Maimonides failed to see that God is not a univocal but analogical cause, some of whose effects may be properly attributed to Him supereminently.⁴

(2) The second concomitant of the cause-effect relation follows upon the first one. For since perfections do not exist in God in the same way as they do in creatures, some are said to be there only virtually and not formally as they are found in the creature.⁵ As St. Thomas noted:

whatever perfections exist in an effect must be found in the effective cause: either in the same formally; if it is an univocal agent--as when a man pro-

¹Farrell, op. cit., I, 57.

²Gilby, Philosophical Texts, P. 67, NL.

³Patterson, op. cit., p. 234.

⁴Anderson, op. cit., p. 216.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q4, A2, body.

duces man; or in a more eminent degree, if it is an equivocal agent¹....
Now it is plain that the effect must pre-exist virtually in the efficient cause....²

The reason that God, the equivocal cause of creatures,³ only contains some perfections "virtually" is that these, by their very nature, imply limitations.⁴

Now beyond the fact that Aquinas would establish the causal relationship as his means of affirming positive attributes of God is the further implication that the principle of analogy is implied in this very connection.

Analogy is "Mean" Between Equivocal and Univocal.--Thomas neither wishes to have God purely equivocal (totally different) from creatures as Maimonides nor will he concede to Scotus the univocal element that would give God and man natures entirely the same (though differing in magnitude).

The escape between this is via analogy. (1) First of all "...it is impossible for anything to be predicated univocally of God and a creature," says Thomas, "this is made plain as follows: every effect of an univocal agent is adequate to the agent's power: and no creature being finite can be adequate to the power of the first agent which is infinite".⁵ And furthermore, in a univocal predication "...the nature signified by the name is common to those of whom the

¹He also says, "for we asserted that all the perfections to be found in other things are to be ascribed to God in the same way as effects are found in their equivocal causes: which causes are in their effects virtually..." Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 31.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q4, A2, body.

³Thomas says an equivocal cause is both like and unlike its agent. Like it inasmuch as it has produced something that exists as God also exists. But different with regard to the mode of existence. Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 29.

⁴Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 213.

⁵Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A7, body.

univocal predication is made".¹ Actually, the creature falls short of God both by nature and existence. The latter is his by participation and the former is only a copy of the divine essence.²

(2) But at the same time, predications of God and creatures cannot be purely equivocal otherwise "...the perfections of other genera could not be said to be found in Him unless there were some resemblance between His perfection and the perfection of other genera".³ God has some real relationships to creatures. And "...the names predicated of God and of other things are attributed to God according to some relation He has to those things....This is why we can transfer our reasoning about other things to God".⁴

Elsewhere Thomas gives five arguments to prove his point.⁵ In each he assumes the causal connection which he has before established and concludes that without it all names applied to God would be nominal, meaningless, empty, futile, and unrelated.

(3) "Therefore it must be said that these names are said of God and creatures in an analogous sense..." concludes Thomas. "And in this way some things are said of God and creatures...not in a purely equivocal nor in a purely univocal sense. For we can name God only from creatures".⁶ "It follows, then, from what has been said, that those things which are said of God and other things

¹Aquinas, Truth, I, Q2, All, body.

²Aquinas, On the Power of God, Q7, A7, R2. Anderson notes three distinctions between the "univocal" and analogical which are helpful. (1) The concept of the univocal is "clear and distinct"; the analogical is "confused" (fused together). (2) There is a "simple unity" among analogates in the univocal; the analogical has only "proportional unity". (3) The univocal is "quidditative" similarity; the analogical is non-quidditative. Anderson, op. cit., p. 322.

³Aquinas, Truth, I, Q2, All.

⁴Aquinas, Compendium of Theology, chapter 27.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 33.

⁶Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q13, A5.

are predicated neither univocally nor equivocally...."¹

From these passages and others like them, it is apparent that there are only three alternatives for Aquinas in the predication of attributes of God. The important thing, however is that there is at least one that is valid. He feels no compunctions to conclude that a given perfection must be either equivocal or univocal as applied to God. It is both/and; it is analogous.

So "the positive perfections in God will be made known to us by an analysis of the principle of causality which is the basis of all analogous predication".² But by what kind of analogy does Thomas pave this road from earth to heaven?

The Kind of Analogy Used to Show God's Essence

It has been a matter of debate among Thomistic interpreters as to which analogy Thomas used in demonstrating the essential nature of God. The three basic schools have been noted previously, and now the evidence must be examined in order to come to a conclusion.

It Would Seem That

On the one hand it would seem that Thomas uses the analogy of attribution to describe the divine essence for several reasons. (1) St. Thomas himself held that there was a "proportion" (relation of attribution) between God and creatures. (2) Attribution is basic to the analogy of being. (3) It alone enables us to predicate anything of God. (4) And in all analogous by proper proportionality there is a metaphorical element.³

¹Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 34.

²Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 223.

³These are substantially the arguments of the Suarezians. See John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 160 ff.

On the Authority of St. Thomas.--St. Thomas applies the attribution of "good" and "true" to God and creatures according to priority and posteriority and this is proper to the analogy of attribution.¹ Furthermore, he acknowledges a "proportion" between God and creature which is another way of saying analogy of attribution when he says: "and in this sense there can be a proportion of the creature to God, inasmuch as it is related to Him as the effect to its cause...."²

Attribution Alone the Analogy of Being.--Furthermore in order to have an analogy of being,

...it is necessary that one member (in this case, God) be through its very form, properly and absolutely, that which is designated to be by the common name, whereas the other members (in this case, creatures) will have no proper being of their own and therefore will receive the common name only in virtue of the fact that they are 'subject to a certain proportion or comparison' to the first member.³

Now there is a distinction between an extrinsic and an intrinsic attribution. In the first kind, God alone would have "existence" intrinsically and all creatures be said to "exist" only by extrinsic relation to Him. In the other God alone possesses "existence" absolutely and creatures relatively but both intrinsically. Now "the analogy or attribution, which the creature has to God under the aspect of being is of the latter sort, that is, it is based on proper and intrinsic being, having an essential relation to or dependence upon God."⁴

In this case, then, the analogy of attribution by intrinsic denomination would seem to be the proper analogy of being.

Proper Proportionality Possesses Metaphor.--An analysis of the nature of

¹See Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q16, A6, Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 32 and Truth, 2, 11.

²Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q12, A1, R4.

³Anderson is here stating the Suarezian argument, op. cit., p. 106.

⁴Ibid., p. 105. (Quoted from Suarez, Disputations Metaphysical, XXVIII, 3).

proper proportionality would seem to confirm further the conclusion that attribution is the basic analogy of being. For "...every veritable analogy of proportionality includes an element of metaphor and impropriety, just as 'smiling' is said of a meadow through metaphorical transference...."¹ That is, proportionality has only an extrinsic relation of its proportions; it is a kind of extrinsic attribution. And if this is true then it follows that there is no proper analogy of proportionality between God and creatures.

Attribution is Only Basis for Naming God.---The real concern in this question of which kind of analogy Thomas used is which kind is necessary to enable us to affirm attributes of God. Copleston observing this said:

...I do not see how we could know that God has any perfections save by way of the analogy of attribution. All analogical predication rests on the real relation and likeness of creatures to God, and it seems to me that the analogy of proportionality presupposes analogy of proportion or attribution and that the latter is the more fundamental of the two kinds of analogy.²

So it would seem necessary, in order to avoid pure equivocations in theistic affirmations, to rely on the relation of attribution which links God and creature by an analogy of being.

On The Contrary

On the other hand, this is apparently not so. (1) For St. Thomas explicitly teaches that proportionality is the only analogy which enables us to know God. (2) Furthermore, proper proportionality alone enables us to say anything about the infinite in finite terms. (3) And, finally, proportionality is the true metaphysical analogy which saves us from monism.

The Explicit Teaching of Thomas.---Speaking of the analogy of attribution,

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 105 (Quoted from Suarez, op. cit.).

²Copleston, op. cit., p. 356.

St. Thomas says, "...nothing can be predicated analogously of God and creatures according to this type of analogy; for no creature has such a relation to God that it could determine the divine perfection".¹ But in the analogy of proper proportionality, "...no definite relation is involved between the things which have something in common analogously, so there is no reason why some name cannot be predicated analogously of God and creature in this manner."²

That is to say, since there is no proportion between God and creature there can be no analogy of "proportion" but nothing hinders there being a relation of proportions or an analogy of proportionality.

Only Analogy Between Finite and Infinite.--To elaborate this further, St. Thomas points out that such a relation of proper proportions is the only way the finite can know the infinite. Since there is an infinite difference of perfection between God and creatures, they cannot be related on any generic level whatsoever. Their natures are not of the same "kind" in any sense. Theirs is a likeness of unlike things. And they are similar only insofar as being may be predicated of both in accordance to their individual level of existence-- that is, proportionally, by a proper proportionality.

Only Metaphysical Salvation from Monism.--From this may be deduced the metaphysical contribution of proportionality. It alone is the answer to the Parmenidean problem.³ The only way we may have many beings, each of which has its own being is to steer clear of "beings" being called "being" merely by virtue of a relation to "Being". Cajetan, the chief of the commentators on Thomistic analogy, wrote:

¹Aquinas, Truth, I, Q2, All, body.

²Ibid.

³See chapter 2.

By means of analogy of proportionality we know indeed the intrinsic entity, goodness, truth, etc., of things which are not known from the preceding analogy. For this reason, metaphysical speculations without knowledge of this analogy suffer the same fate as those ancient philosophers who did not know logic....¹

And therefore, as Anderson pointedly observes, without the doctrine of analogy by proper proportionality there is nothing to save one from a metaphysical monism.²

Now since proportionality is so basic both for the metaphysician and the theologian, and since St. Thomas seems to explicitly exclude attribution as a means of knowing God, then why is it that he uses attribution when predicating names of God? In what sense is attribution needed, and which is the basic analogy?

I Answer That

"I answer that" St. Thomas rightly considered proportionality alone to be the basic and sufficient analogy for his theistic argumentation but that he also used, and it is necessary to use, an element of "attribution" in proportionality to make it a sufficient and proper analogy. This may be understood from how he uses both and why it is necessary for both to be present in order to have a solid foundation for the knowledge of God.³

How Thomas Uses Both.--The only sense in which Thomas admits⁴ the use of "attribution" or "proportion" as he calls it is indirectly and in a special sense. He writes: "In another sense every relation of one thing to another is

¹Cajetan, op. cit., p. 28.

²Anderson, op. cit., p. 117 ff.

³Phillips confirms this as the thomistic view in general, Modern Thomistic Metaphysics, (Westminster: The Newman Bookshop, 1935), II, 173.

⁴Of course there may be a sense in which he is not willing to admit he is using it. This we are not able to determine with the information we possess.

called proportion. And in this sense there can be a proportion of the creature to God, inasmuch as it is related to Him as the effect to its cause...."¹

This is to say, that between God and creatures, because of the unique causal relation they bear, there is an exception to the general rule and we may say in a special sense² that they are proportioned. But this proportion is not to be understood as a direct one but only an indirect one via the relation of proportions. For he writes, "although there cannot be between the finite and the infinite a proportion properly so called, yet there can be a proportionality or the likeness of two proportions".³ This being so, when we approach a passage in which he apparently uses attribution in some sense, it seems more consistent to interpret it as being only a "virtual" attribution contained in the analogy of proper proportionality.⁴ Such a passage is the following:

Everything is called good from the Divine Goodness, as from the first exemplary, effective and final principle of all goodness [virtual attribution]. Nevertheless, everything is called good by reason of the likeness of the Divine Goodness inherent in it, which is formally its own goodness denominating itself [proper proportionality].⁵

Cajetan was one of the first to explain this phenomenon by his "formal-fundamental" distinction which means that formally considered proportionality doesn't entail any element of attribution. But fundamentally and actually there is such an element in it. The first is the order of specification and the latter is in the order of exercise.⁶ With the result that "it is clear that while they are

¹Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q12, A1, R4.

²Attribution is really a logical analogy. Hence, to use it metaphysically is a special use. See Anderson, op. cit., p. 251

³Aquinas, Truth, I, Q23, A7, R8.

⁴This is Anderson's view and seems to explain the problem. See op. cit., p. 253, N20.

⁵Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q6, A4.

⁶Anderson explains "...that certain interpreters of St. Thomas [e.g.

formally distinct, both analogies may in some sense exist together".¹

Now one further problem complicates this question. It has been argued that St. Thomas came to abandon the analogy of proportionality for the analogy of attribution in his latter writings. The fact that Thomas does not make reference to proportionality in the two Summae would seem to favor this. But the repeated statement of proportionality in his earlier writings seems to indicate its permanent importance for Thomas. Patterson reviewing this question concludes "...that we lack sufficient evidence to enable us to embrace either opinion".² Copleston, on the other hand, is more definite when he says:

...this does not seem to me likely /i.e., that Thomas abandoned proportionality/. In the commentary on the Sentences he gives both types of analogy, and even if in his latter works...he seems to emphasize analogy of proportion that does not seem to me to indicate that he ever abandoned analogy of proportionality.³

This would seem to be the more consistent view since the other argument is the generally weak one from silence. Furthermore, it seems apparent that proportionality is everywhere presupposed in his latter works and that he is merely building upon it when he uses attribution.

Why it is Necessary to Use Both.--Perhaps the emphasis of Thomas' mature life upon attribution was in compensation for his earlier neglect of its usefulness. Be this as it may, it is evident that Thomas eventually did make use of

Suarez, Descoqs, etc.] have misunderstood him because they have failed to apply Cajetan's "formal method to the problem of analogy..." op. cit., p. 232.

¹Ibid., p. 125. There is a further enlightening comment here by Anderson which reads: "Thus under the formality of attribution, all the accident-modes of being are said to be by extrinsic denomination from the substance-mode, although under some other formality they can also be said to exist in virtue of the being actually inherent in them. Likewise, under the formality of attribution, all 'goods' are said to be good by extrinsic denomination from the First Good, although under some other formality they can also be said to be good in virtue of the goodness actually inherent in them." op. cit., p. 125.

²Patterson, op. cit., p. 249.

³Copleston, op. cit., p. 355.

it at least in the "fundamental" and "virtual" way described above. And this would seem to be necessary for several reasons.

(2) "In order to avoid equivocation in natural theology it is necessary to fall back on that relation which links every effect to its cause," writes Anderson. This is "the only bond which allows us to ascend from the creature to the Creator. This relation, in the language of St. Thomas, is an "analogy", that is, a proportion. It found a virtual analogy of attribution".¹ So then without analogy of attribution it hardly seems possible to avoid an agnosticism.²

(2) In order to tie the creature to God in a causal relationship there is need of an implied attribution or proportionality. Proportion logically underlies proportionality, and "the natural use of proportion is inseparable from that of the proportionality...."³

(3) Furthermore, attribution is implied in the analogy of being itself. It is based on proper proportionality of course, says Anderson, but because there is a relation of analogates to prime analogate (though not extrinsically; this is why it is virtually present not formally) it does have a place in the analogy of being.⁴

How the Two are Related.--Doubtless, St. Thomas did not distinguish and identify these two analogies in exactly this way. But this seems to be the best explication of what he certainly did imply.

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 253.

²Mascall, op. cit., p. 113.

³Farrer, op. cit., p. 53.

⁴Anderson, op. cit., p. 246 ff. But when the two analogies accompany each other only one is formally present, the other virtually. See John of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 165.

To sum up the relation of these two analogies we may note the following:

(1) attribution tells us that there is a relation between the finite and the infinite; proportionality explains how there can be such a relation; (2) proportionality is the basic metaphysical analogy; attribution is virtually present in it; (3) there is only an indirect and proportionate relation between any of the proportions in proportionality; because of this there is a direct proportion or attribution between the proportions; (4) since God is exemplar cause, creatures are like Him proportionally; He is efficient cause and creature have a proportion to Him;¹ (5) proportionality is metaphysically necessary; attribution is epistemologically necessary.

SUMMARY

It is not possible to know God as He is in Himself though we are able to affirm many things analogously of His essence. The apparent contradiction in Thomas along this line springs from a failure to distinguish between what we can conceive of God and what we can affirm of Him. We know that the many things said of God merge into one in the simple substance of God. This is why we must attribute many perfections to Him since no one finite term can express His infinite substance completely.

Now there are three ways we may affirm things of God: negatively (to remove all imperfections from Him), eminently (according to a higher mode), and causally (based on the similarity of cause and effect). The most basic of these is the causal relation, and analogy is implied within it.

The kind of analogy necessary to establish this relationship between God and man is a question in Thomas. He apparently used both though giving an earlier preference to proportionality and a latter emphasis on attribution.

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 155.

He probably did not desire to discard proportionality at all (he presupposed it) but came to acknowledge the necessity of an element of attribution to secure the analogical tie between God and man. Whatever his evolution of thought, it seems more consistent to interpret his final theistic structure as founded in proper proportionality with a "virtual" attribution in it.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ANALOGY

Now that the doctrine of analogy has been analyzed from the Thomistic point of view, it remains to be asked whether or not it is sufficient for the task to which Thomas has put it. Is it a solid link in the chain of his theistic argumentation or not?

Probably the best way to answer this question is to review some of the important criticisms of Thomistic analogy in view of what Thomas taught and in the light of what subsequent Thomists have elaborated in defense of this foundation.

The subsequent critique will be according to the following procedure: (1) first the criticism will be stated ("it would seem that"); (2) next the Thomistic reply to this, either from Thomas or subsequent Thomists, will be given ("on the contrary"); (3) and then the situation will be briefly evaluated and some conclusion formed about it ("I answer that ").

Since it is impossible to deal with all the criticisms, a few of the major ones will be grouped under the following heads: (1) Thomistic analogy amounts to agnosticism; (2) it is platonic; (3) it is sophistic.

The Charge of Agnosticism

Casserley summed up this criticism very pointedly when he wrote: "...the analogy therefore between Creator God and creature man is perhaps too fragile to bear the weight of the imposing philosophical structure which St. Thomas proposes

to erect".¹

It Would Seem That

So then it would seem that Thomistic analogy is insufficient, and among the many reasons given for such a conclusion as this by Thomistic critics is that Thomas' "...doctrine of analogy makes the knowledge of God impossible".² This allegation is generally based on two factors: (1) the denial of a "univocal" element in analogy renders the knowledge of God impossible, and (2) there is no way of knowing the infinite side of the proportion in proper proportionality.

Denial of "Univocal" Element.--Historically, this was first emphasized by Duns Scotus.³ A modern statement of the argument runs as follows:

The denial of a univocal element in predications about God therefore reduces analogical predication to sheer equivocation and makes God unknowable: the only thing that makes analogy meaningful is a univocal element or point of likeness which can be clearly specified. But the thomists deny just such a univocal element.⁴

Another has called this a contradiction saying:

Thomas admits that there is no univocal element of relation existing between God and creation, and yet he turns to the analogy to lead us to the Almighty, when the very thing which saves analogy from being sheer equivocation is its univocal element.⁵

Impossibility of Knowing the Proportions.--This objection has been pointed out from the time of Suarez and Descogs by those that follow in the Suarezian tradition. Patterson has given a contemporary statement of the ob-

¹Casserley, op. cit., p.53.

²Stewart C. Hackett, The Resurrection of Theism (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), p. 130.

³Duns Scotus, Summa Theologica (not translated into English).

⁴Hackett, op. cit., p. 129.

⁵Edward John Carnell, An Introduction to Christian Apologetics (third edition, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Co., 1950), p. 147.

jection as follows:

Ingenious as this theory is [i.e. proper proportionality], it nevertheless creates serious difficulties of its own. It relies upon the possibility of establishing a ratio between two mutually incommensurable orders, the temporal and the eternal, which shall justify us in asserting as the finite is to the finite, so the infinite is to the infinite. But according to Thomas' own teaching, this would seem to be impossible.¹

The real problem, then, is in establishing a bond between the two sides of the proportionality: finite essence/finite existence : : infinite essence/infinite existence. What does the ": :" mean? To explain it by another analogy of proper proportionality (with another ": :") would involve one in an infinite regress of ": : 's". Furthermore, as Thomas contends, there is no real distinction between essence and existence in God, hence, there can be no ratio set up between Him and creatures.

So we are left with a real knowledge of "finite essence/finite existence", an infinite regress of ": : 's", and no real distinction between the "infinite essence and the infinite existence". Therefore, we would have no basis for a comparison at all and no knowledge of God by the proper proportionality of Thomism.

On The Contrary

For the strict Thomist, the analogy of proper proportionality is the only salvation from a complete agnosticism. Cajetan writes: "between the extreme univocity advocated by monism and the extreme equivocity of pluralism, between anthropomorphism and complete agnosticism, there is but one middle ground--metaphysical analogy".² And "it is by virtue of the analogy of proper

¹Patterson, op. cit., p. 244. Furthermore, in order to make any comparison of proportions it would seem to be necessary to know at least three of the four parts. In this case there are only two known, the finite ones. And in the infinite there are no parts with which to compare anything.

²Cajetan, op. cit., p. 6.

proportionality that Thomistic philosophy escapes agnosticism...."¹

Concerning the "Univocal" Element.--If by "univocal" one means "of the same generic nature", then for Thomas there is no univocal element in analogy.² For God and creature are not of the same "kind" only differing in degree. For there is an infinite difference between the infinite and the finite.

On the other hand there is an indirect "univocal" element in the relation of the two proportions. That is, in this special sense the finite is proportioned to the infinite. The "sameness" or identity is not between God's essence and the creatures but in the relation between the essence of God and His existence as compared to the essence of man and his existence. The "univocal" element is in this relation; it is a resemblance of relations. All generic likeness is ruled out or we end in a Monism.³

The Problem of the Proportions.--St. Thomas never explicitly answered the problem of how we know the proportions of this ratio in analogy. But he has left the principles with which to do it. Thomistic commentators have given basically two answers to it.

(1) The strict Thomists attempt to defend proportionality on its own ground following Cajetan. Lagrange contends that

...there are not two unknown elements in each of these proportions, but two terms known immediately with their created mode, one term expressing the uncreated analogue which is mediately known (the first cause), whence we infer⁴ the presence of the fourth term, which until then remained unknown.

¹V. E. Smith, "On the Being of Metaphysics", New Scholastic (1946), Vol. XX, p. 81.

²Replying to this objection, Anderson writes: "...Patterson has failed to grasp the principle of Thomistic analogy. He wants univocal knowledge of God, which is the only type of knowledge he recognizes to be genuine. Little wonder, then, that he finds 'contradictions' in St. Thomas". op. cit., pp. 265, 266.

³See chapter IV. p. 85 ff.

⁴Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 227.

So we have two created terms known directly, one uncreated term known indirectly, via causality from which we infer the fourth term (realizing that it is both like and unlike creatures).

And even though there is no real distinction between the essence and existence of God, there is a logical distinction which suffices for the comparison. The third and fourth terms aren't one term even though they represent only one reality.¹

(2) Other Thomists are frank to admit the unacceptability of proportionality alone to establish this bond between God and creatures. Mascall sees traces in Garrigou-Lagrange indicating a need for something more than proportionality alone to explain the proportions. Hence, Mascall claims that it isn't sufficient to compare the divine mode with creatures unless we use attribution as a connecting link.² So that we may say that the proportions of the analogy of proportionality are held together in the formula by an analogy of attribution. And with respect to the ": :",

it does not matter whether one says the same or similar because in the present question these terms are in perfect agreement. Once numerical identity is excluded, there remains only formal identity....³

I Answer That

Is the doctrine of analogy sufficient to resist this charge of agnosticism. Have the Thomists vindicated it upon Thomas' own principles? "I answer that" it seems that they have.

Certainly analogy is defensible with an element of attribution and even

¹Byles, "Analogy of Being", p. 252.

²Mascall, op. cit., p. 112 ff.

³Cajetan, op. cit., p. 37, N4 (editor's comment).

the proportional relationship alone would seem to make sense without it. Though I am inclined to agree that a "virtual" attribution is necessary in order to predicate something about God's essence.

It seems necessary to assert that though there is an infinite difference between the perfections of God and creatures, there is nevertheless not a total lack of similarity. And only an analogy of proper proportionality can show how this is possible, and the attributive element demands that it must be true.

Of course, as has been previously pointed out, the doctrine of analogy is implied in the process of causality by which the existence of God is proven. So if one should deny that there is a sufficient reason for everything, then analogy would not follow.

But on the other hand, analogy can and does follow because one cannot deny that there is a reason for everything with presupposing that there is in his very denial which is a contradiction. For either he had a reason in asserting that there is not a reason for everything or his affirmation is senseless.¹ In the former case, he is self contradictory and in the latter, pointless. Hence, we conclude that the principle that there is a sufficient reason for everything (that is, causality) is valid.²

¹Even David Hume was compelled to admit that it is absurd to deny causality though he doubted the grounds upon which some would base it. In answering a letter to John Stewart, professor at Edinburgh, he writes: "...I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause. I only maintained, that our Certainty of the Falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from Intuition nor Demonstration; but from another source....There are many different kinds of certainty; and some of them as satisfactory to the mind, though perhaps not so regular, as the demonstrative kind". Book review on "Philosophy of David Hume", New Scholastic, Vol. XVII (1943), p.184.

²Miss Dorothy Emmet suggests that there are two alternatives to the principle of sufficient reason: (1) we may just accept the fact that "something given exists" with a "natural piety" and then seek to elucidate its character;

Therefore, presupposing as we have, the Thomistic realistic starting point in the limited beings of our experience, we will also have to grant Thomas an uncaused cause or a selfsufficient reason. And once it is granted that an uncaused cause has caused the effects of our experience, then it follows that this cause is like these effects (analogy) because a cause can't give what it hasn't got. Or in other words, we are not left in agnosticism with Thomistic analogy.

The Charge of Platonism

This charge is leveled against the alleged platonic presupposition of Thomistic analogy. "The whole doctrine of analogy rests upon and presupposes the theory of the degrees of reality...."¹ To the modern mind this is "platonic" and outmoded.

It Would Seem That

Ever since Emmanuel Kant pointed out that "being" is not a predicate it would seem that the platonic hierarchy in which there are degrees of existence is indefensible. And Thomism is unmistakably based upon such a hierarchy of being.

That Thomistic Analogy is Based on Degrees of Being---St. Thomas himself admits this in his fourth "way" when he argues from the less perfect to the Most Perfect One.

Furthermore, the essential metaphysical principle of actuality and po-

(2) or we may have given contingent facts which when fully understood form a necessary system. Dorothy M. Emmet, The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1957), p. 174.

Now it appears to me that the first one psychologically evades the fact of causality while the second one subtly assumes it.

¹Patterson, op. cit., p. 249.

tentiality on the level of existence necessitates that the essence of a given being limits the amount of existence that it may receive. This is why "being" is analogous and Parmenides is wrong. Because, for St. Thomas, beings differ in degree from one another. And so, even though the Platonic heritage of some elements in Thomas are debatable, nevertheless his doctrine of degrees of being is undeniably Platonic.

That Hierarchy of Being is Wrong.--The force of the argument against the doctrine of degrees of reality is traceable to the pen of Emmanuel Kant when he wrote: "'Being' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves. Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgment."¹

Since "being" or existence is not an attribute that can be attributed to something over and above what it is and hence make it more perfect than it was, it follows that existence has no degrees at all. The concept of existence is inseparably connected with that of a thing. It isn't a thing unless it exists. One thing doesn't have more reality than another thing. They are both equally real because they are both equally "things".

On The Contrary

Certainly there is no hierarchy of existence as such in the Thomistic sense of esse nor need there be such. However, there is a hierarchy of being in the sense of ens, and this is necessary.² All things are equally real but all realities are not equal. Esse is manifested on different levels and in varying degrees depending on the determination of essence. The fact of esse

¹Emmanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Norman K. Smith (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1933), p. 504.

²Taken from personal interview with Dr. Massi, University of Detroit, 1959.

is the same for all things but the mode of existence is different.

No Hierarchy of Existence (Esse).--The most basic principle of Thomism excludes the possibility of their being a hierarchy of Esse as such. Esse in itself is unlimited and unique.¹ It is the broadest general predication that can be made. It includes all things. It is a transcendental. Hence it cannot be hierarchically ordered as more or less; it is Most. In fact, Pure Esse is God and therefore, as such is not hierarchical. To assert such would necessitate an emination which Thomas explicitly opposes. The esse of the creature is not the Esse of God. On the contrary, it is the Infinite Esse that causes the esse of creatures in composition with essence while remaining distinct from either.

A Hierarchy of Being (Ens).--But there is a hierarchy of being in Thomistic analogy. It is being in the substantival sense as the object of metaphysics.² But this being or ens is not mere existence (esse), it is a composition of essence and existence. Properly speaking, it is a hierarchy of beings (ens's) which when considered formally insofar as they are beings line up into a hierarchy of Ens. It is a hierarchy of finite beings considered insofar as they are existing things and not from the standpoint of their quantity, quality, relation, etc. So there is a hierarchy of being or ens only inasmuch ens is found in all composite beings on every level.

A Distinction Between Esse and Essence.--The only reason being is hierarchical or analogical at all is because it is composite.³ Each being (ens) is composed of esse and essence. These are the co-principles of being actually inseparable but really distinct. Essence is the potential principle of being

¹Aquinas, A Compendium of Theology, p. 17.

²See Phillips, Modern Thomistic Metaphysics, Westminster: The Newman Bookshop, 1935.

³See chapter II, p. 28.

and existence is the actual principle. The former is a capacity of difference and determination while the latter is the reality of that determination. This is why the fact of existence is the same for all beings but the mode of existence differs. A lunatic and a genius are equally human, but the reality of humanity is more manifest in the latter because of the capacity of the nature in which their humanity is manifested.

I Answer That

Have Thomists vindicated the hierarchy of being that Thomas' doctrine of analogy rests upon. "I answer that" the Thomistic doctrine of analogy is as solid as the realistic premise that we know a hierarchy of beings and the real distinction between essence and existence in finite beings. The former is presupposed in this treatment and the latter seems necessary in any understanding of beings or things.

A Valid Distinction.--Granted that there are many beings that differ one from another, then we are obliged to acknowledge that these beings must be composed of a "whatness" and "isness" that are not identical. For the "whatness" is subject to change and the "isness" abides change. We have a potentiality for difference and change in a being and a reality or identity that abides the change. The first we call essence and the latter, existence.

The only alternative to this is to admit that the essence of a being is its existence in which case its essence is to exist or, in other words, it is a necessary being. But the beings we know are obviously contingent since their being (ens) is altered and changed by circumstances. Therefore, we have many different kinds of realities or existents which differ in their very being (ens).

A Necessary Differentiation.--Whether or not St. Thomas taught more than this is not only problematic but irrelevant. He did teach enough to secure the basis of analogy. Act and potency alone are sufficient, and a hierarchy of existence (esse) is not needed at all. If he taught such at all, it is only an

implicit hierarchy of esse in beings which are composed of esse and essence. So whether or not he adopted some of the Platonic error with the defensible truth is only academic here. He did distinguish beings by an analogy of being based in the distinction between essence and existence. This seems to be sufficient.

The Charge of Sophism

The word sophistic is here meant in the sense of subtle and evasive tautologies or circular arguments. Of these the Thomists have been credited with not a few.

It Would Seem That

Among the most often repeated charges that bear on the question of analogy are: (1) the syllogism is invalid since it has four terms; (2) there is an ontological slight of hand in every cosmological argument; (3) it is impossible to prove the infinite from the finite. So it would seem that on these bases that Thomistic argumentation is sophistic.

Four Terms in the Syllogism.--This objection has persisted ever since the days of Thomas. He recognized it and attempted to answer it himself. The objection may be briefly stated. The terms in the conclusion may not take on any additional meaning over and above what they possess in the premises.

In other words, the meaning must be the same in the premises and conclusion or univocal. Anything short of this is equivocal and leaves one with four terms and an invalid argument.¹ For example, in the following syllogism the word "cause" is analogous.

Every finite thing is caused
Now the world is finite
Therefore, the world has a cause.

¹Allan B. Wolter, The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus (New York: Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure, 1946), p. 44.

Now the "cause" in the premise is finite and the "cause" in the conclusion is infinite. And between them there is an infinite difference. So the syllogism is invalid.

The Ontological Slight of Hand.---Closely connected with this objection is what Kant considered the hidden ontological argument in every cosmological proof. "In other words," says Kant, "I can never complete the regress to the conditions of existence save by assuming a necessary being, and yet am never in a position to begin with such a being."¹ Casserley gives a unique modern twist to this when he not only admits Kant's premise but asserts that "...the rejection of the ontological argument was St. Thomas's fatal error, perhaps his only really serious mistake".²

For Casserley, the ontological argument is a necessary prelude to the cosmological and the latter is a sort of "analogical essay" which shows how one's belief in God enables him to make sense of his experiences. In any case, there is a sophism in the syllogism of every cosmological argument.

Can't Know the Infinite From the Finite.---At best the cosmological argument could only prove that there was a finite cause for the finite existence we perceive. This objection was first very forcefully put by Hume as he wrote: "when we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other, and can never be allowed to ascribe to the cause any qualities, but what are exactly sufficient to produce the effect".³ "This conclusion of Hume is too evident to labor over," says Carnell echoing Hume's scepticism. "The Christian God is infinite; while all one needs to explain a

¹Kant, op. cit., p. 515.

²Casserley, op. cit., pp. 84, 85.

³David Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, p. 144.

finite universe is a finite God".¹

On The Contrary

These objections are not new to the Thomists. In fact, Thomas himself gave answer to them in his day.

Concerning the Analogical Middle Term.--Scotus and the logicians have disputed the use of an analogical middle term from time immemorial. But St. Thomas didn't invent it in order to prove his Christian God. He borrowed it from Aristotle the pagan philosopher and chief of all logicians. Furthermore, as Cajetan has pointed out, there is sufficient unity in an analogous middle term of this type that it is really one term applied proportionally and on different levels of being to both the infinite and finite.

Concerning the Ontological Slight of Hand.--No one opposed the ontological argument as vigorously as did Thomas. The only sense in which the Thomistic argument begins with God is that it presupposes a nominal definition of Him. Prior to the proof God is only a logical possibility.² "Kants attempt to reduce the proofs of St. Thomas to the anselmian proof is a futile one. It is not from the idea, but from reality, from being as existing, that St. Thomas takes his start...."³ [emphasis ours]

Concerning Deriving the Infinite From the Finite.--Thomas answered this in his Commentary on the Sentences when he showed that by proper proportionality there is a proportionable relationship between God and creatures.⁴ Furthermore,

¹Carnell, op. cit., p. 130.

²Mortimer Adler, "The Demonstration of God's Existence", The Thomist, V. V., (1943), p. 211.

³Olgianti and Zyburra, op. cit., p. 81.

⁴See p. 67, n 5.

the term "in-finite" is a negative term that merely means that God is not-finite. Whatever He may be we do not know. He is above us. But we may be sure He is not limited because if He were, then He would need a cause to explain His existence, and so on. But an infinite series of existentially dependent causes is impossible.¹ So there must be a basic cause of all finite existence which is itself not finite. And this is what is meant by in-finite.

I Answer That

What are we to say about these charges of sophism. Is it possible to acquit the Thomists from these charges? It would appear so. The syllogisms make sense logically.

But the important question--one which is being seriously discussed among Thomists too--concerns the actual place a syllogism has in demonstrating God's existence. Some have admitted a fallacious appearance in the logical formulation of the argument. Mascall contends that St. Thomas' five ways are not so much proofs that God exists as they are discussions of the "cosmological relation" the world bears to God which relation we apprehend in one cognitive act.² So that the existence of finite being does not logically imply the existence of an infinite Being but ontologically it does.³ The real transition is a "grasp of the ontological reality", and "recognition of God in finite existence" in the "cosmological relation".

These neo-Thomists would contend that one cannot prove by logic for

¹A potentially infinite series is possible or an actual infinite series may be possible if the causes are accidentally related but an actual infinite series of essentially dependent causes is not possible. It is like saying there is no need for a bottom brick to hold up the whole pile or a first link upon which to suspend a whole chain. So there must be a first cause to give causality to the whole series infinite or not.

²Mascall, op. cit., p. 80.

³Ibid., p. 78.

logic deals with secondary intentions only. A metaphysical demonstration deals with inference from existence to existence.¹ And the fact that St. Thomas had only one proof that he presented in five different ways would seem to agree with this.² At least it is certain that St. Thomas did not intend that God should be discovered at the end of his syllogisms.

But what place St. Thomas really gave to logic in this "existential inference" is a moot question. Maybe it was just to make clear to the mind what it already vaguely understood as an effect-cause relationship between the world and God (à la Mascall). Perhaps it was a logical formulization of an "existential syllogism" invalid on the level of essence but valid on the level of existence--a kind of logical illustration (à la Farrell). Or perhaps it was intended only to persuade the mind that such a conclusion from the world to God was rational or something else.

My own tentative opinion is that the real proof is an "existential inference" that all men make naturally, perhaps subconsciously and that this inference may be put into a valid syllogistic form but that a logical syllogism doesn't prove God by itself but rather that it demonstrates that this existential inference is also rational. The real proof is existential, natural (perhaps unconscious), but also inferential since it is concluded from the world of our experience that there is a God who is above it.

When a man makes this inference naturally, he is called a "believer" when he elaborates it rationally, he is labeled a "theist"; when he denies he has made it, he claims to be an "atheist". But all men make it. That is, all rational men under normal conditions do so.

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 157.

²See chapter III.

Conclusion

There are many more objections to be leveled against Thomistic analogy most of which are of an epistemological nature. (1) The logical positivists would contend that it is meaningless to talk about metaphysical abstracts such as analogy. (2) The Reformed theologian would say that Thomas does not account for the noetic effects of sin in his doctrine. (3) Some modern epistemologists will deny the validity of the aristotelian realism which they say is necessary to Thomistic analogy, etc.

But all of these are of an epistemological nature and have been excluded by the province of this paper and because such questions would involve another work, this thesis has concentrated on analogy itself and presupposed epistemology. So our final conclusion is contingent in nature.

We conclude, therefore, that granted the Thomistic realistic perception of limited beings, the doctrine of analogy stated and implied in St. Thomas has not sufficiently suffered from attacks to render it useless as a bridge from the finite to the infinite to say nothing of its helpfulness in explaining how the infinite God can communicate intelligibly with the finite man.

If there are three necessary steps in order to ascend from the world to the true God, viz., epistemology, analogy, and the identification of the proven God with the real God, then analogy is the bridge between the shores of earth and heaven. Now this bridge may be short on both ends (this we haven't considered), but it is solid in the middle.

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