

***The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being according to Thomas Aquinas.* By BERNARD MONTAGNES. Trans. by E.M. MACIEROWSKI. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004. Pp. 208. \$25.00 (paper). ISBN 0-87462-624-2.**

*La Doctrine de l'Analogie de L'Être d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin* was originally a Louvain doctoral thesis in 1962, published in 1963 essentially unchanged but for a new brief concluding chapter. It has had steady influence since then among Thomist philosophers and theologians (as can be seen from such recent works as Wipfel's *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* [2000] and Rocca's *Speaking the Incomprehensible God* [2004]). It has recently appeared for the first time in English translation, without any new editorial trappings, by E. M. Macierowski ("reviewed and corrected by Pol Vandavelde" and "edited with revisions by Andrew Tallon"). Making Montagnes' work more widely available is especially appropriate, for by now it is important not just as an exercise in intellectual archeology but as itself one of the important strata of 20<sup>th</sup> century Thomism.

Montagnes' "Introduction" makes clear his focus on "the metaphysical significance" of analogy, with special attention to the influence of Neoplatonic metaphysics, as had been recently brought out by Fabro. In a felicitous phrase, acknowledging both the logical and metaphysical dimensions of the topic, Montagnes says he seeks to present analogy as "the semantics of participation."

The first chapter argues that the development of Aquinas's understanding of causality, and especially "the discovery of being as act," is the key to understanding Aquinas's shifting characterizations of analogy. Comparing early and later discussions of the analogy of "being," Montagnes finds a move away from language about formal causality, imitation, and exemplarity to describe analogy in terms of efficient or productive causality, allowing for a notion of participation that does not imply likeness and so diminish into univocity.

This thesis provides Montagnes, in the second chapter, with a strategy for making sense of a diversity of theological texts. Well known passages across the range of Aquinas's career (from the *Sentences* commentary, *De Veritate*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *Compendium theologiae*, *De Potentia Dei*, and *Summa Theologiae*), seem to present different and inconsistent answers to a recurring question of how creatures are related to God (or how language applies to creatures and God). Montagnes finds in these passages a development from an emphasis on likeness to an emphasis on causal dependence or "reference to one." Montagnes argues that the "likeness" account was insufficient because it could imply the sharing of a common form, and so reduce to univocity; a causal reference is preferable, since it preserves difference while allowing a kind of unity thanks to the metaphysics of participation.

So on Aquinas's mature account, according to Montagnes, the relationship between creatures and God is best understood *logically* as an analogy of attribution, with an intrinsic relationship guaranteed *metaphysically* by participation. In this story, the move toward this teaching from the more naive likeness account is briefly interrupted by an experiment with the relation of "proportionality" in *De Veritate* 2.II. A proportional relationship (represented by the schema a:b::c:d) safeguards divine transcendence better than the relationship of likeness; but since it implies no causal connection or intrinsic

relationship, Montagnes finds that Aquinas quickly abandoned it in favor of the mature view.

Because of the influence of Cajetan's treatise on analogy, the language of proportionality had long dominated Thomistic discussions of analogy. Montagnes' third chapter thus examines the place of Cajetan's analogy theory. Of course he judges that Cajetan was mistaken in universalizing the temporary and idiosyncratic proportionality doctrine of *De Veritate* 2.11, and he also faults Cajetan for attempting to treat analogy as a matter of logic apart from metaphysics. But Montagnes finds these mistakes in turn rooted in a more fundamental departure from Aquinas on the level of metaphysics itself, explored further in the book's "Conclusion." As an alternative to the received opposition between "essentialism" and "existentialism," Montagnes sets forth two alternative versions of Thomistic metaphysics: a "metaphysics of the degrees of being" and a "metaphysics of the idea of being." The former, according to Montagnes, is the authentic position of Aquinas; the latter is that of Cajetan.

As is plain from this summary, there are two main objects to Montagnes' study: if the primary and more explicit goal is to interpret Aquinas's teaching on analogy, a second and related goal is to use this interpretation to advance some general clarifications of Thomistic metaphysics, in particular the nature of the concept of being and the composition of essence and existence.

As for the first goal, Montagnes' attempt to clarify Aquinas's teaching on analogy depends heavily on a genetic or developmental interpretation of Aquinas (from Aristotelian to Christian Neoplatonist), and on a sharp critique of Cajetan. Both strategies in retrospect seem somewhat exaggerated. Montagnes' interpretation of the various passages on the analogy between creatures and God treats them as parallel attempts to answer the same question. However, although there is an undeniable parallelism of formulation (how is a term predicated of creatures and God?), does this necessarily reflect a strict parallelism of theological interest or pedagogical intent? Might the same formulation express different questions in different contexts, and if so, might Aquinas' apparently different answers in fact be consistent, but carefully tailored to say only what is necessary under the circumstances? Montagnes does not show that the relationship of proportionality is inconsistent with a metaphysics of participation, and he does not show that after *De Veritate* 2.11 Aquinas ceases to believe that a relationship of proportionality obtains between creatures and God (c.f. *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q. 14, a. 3, ad 2; IaIIae, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1). He only shows that Aquinas also has other ways of characterizing the relationship between creatures and God, and he simply proposes, without firmly establishing, a genetic interpretation of Aquinas's metaphysics to account for the changing characterizations. (It is worth noting, for instance, that Wippel and Rocca, in the studies previously mentioned, while agreeing with Montagnes about the importance of the metaphysics of causality and the intrinsic relationship implied by participation, do not fully adopt Montagnes genetic thesis; they find more consistency between Aquinas's earlier emphasis on imitation and his later talk of causal dependence.) Aquinas's occasional pronouncements about analogy resist being formulated into a thematically comprehensive "theory of analogy," but it is probably no better to try to make sense of the diversity of his remarks by positing a metanarrative of metaphysical development.

As for the criticism of Cajetan's theory of analogy, this was a common move in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century project to recover a more historical approach to Aquinas (it was shared by Lyttkens and Klubertanz before Montagnes, and by McNerny and Burrell after him). At the time it was a reasonable corrective of previous attempts to accept the authority of Cajetan's "interpretation" or "systematization" of Aquinas (e.g. by Penido, Goergen, and Cajetan's English translators Bushinski and Koren), but by now the significance of Cajetan deserves further reconsideration. Studies of late medieval theories of analogy (by Riva, Tavuzzi, and especially Ashworth) have firmly established that Cajetan was offering his own answers to philosophical questions that developed in the centuries after Aquinas wrote. Cajetan's analogy theory is not a bad interpretation of Aquinas on analogy because it is not really an interpretation of Aquinas after all. Cajetan sought to develop a semantics of analogy, following up comments in his *Categories* commentary on equivocation, and it is no criticism of Cajetan that his treatise "on the analogy of names" ignores metaphysical issues of hierarchy and participation. Montagnes should not have been puzzled about why Cajetan focuses his analysis on the proportional unity of the analogous concept.

As for Montagnes' attempt to redraw the lines of Thomistic metaphysics, it is not clear that it has had much of a legacy. Certainly his book is more remembered for its specific thesis about analogy than for its analysis of Aquinas's distinct contribution to articulating the relationship between being and essence. By today's standards, his distinction between a "metaphysics of the degrees of being" and a "metaphysics of the idea of being" is underdeveloped and impressionistic.

In any case, a rereading of Montagnes provides much opportunity to reflect on the development of Thomistic philosophy and historiography in the last several decades. If anything else, it is humbling to be reminded that, even granting the misleading accretions Thomistic tradition, the historical Aquinas does not just emerge, uncontroversially, from a direct return to his texts. It is also heartening to notice that the historical approach to Aquinas is now extending to a more historical approach to other forces (like Cajetan) in the Thomistic tradition. And we can be grateful for the perspective that allows us a critical appreciation of those historians of philosophy, like Montagnes, who perhaps despite themselves have become a part of a "Thomistic tradition."

A final word about this new edition. It is unfortunate that the English translation itself is not accompanied by a thorough introduction and retrospective on analogy and the background and influence of Montagnes' work. But if this defect is forgivable, some others are not: there are overwhelming editorial and production problems with this volume, too significant to ignore in a review. The publisher to be faulted for poor print quality and poor editing; the volume abounds with errors of grammar, spelling, and formatting. And the editorial defects are not just limited to problems of neglect. A decision to systematically eliminate Christian titles not only omits "Saint" from the title of the book but also, more problematically, results in references to "John of Thomas" instead of "John of St. Thomas." An English edition of Montagnes is worthwhile, and it deserved more professional execution.

JOSHUA P. HOCHSCHILD  
*Mount St. Mary's University*  
*Emmitsburg, MD*