

David Burrell Analogy and Philosophical Language

some significant points from Section III, "Contrasting Medieval Positions"

The basic question dealt with concerns the basis for the possibility of analogy: what, if anything, do the two analogous objects have in common, that makes analogy possible?

For Scotus, the common element is in the objects compared; for Thomas, it is rather in the act of comparing, the cognitional structure of the knowing subject.

In general, the concern about analogy centers on the use of it in reference to creatures and God, not primarily the "easier" case of creature and creature.

Scotus:

1. Names refer to real aspects of things.
2. In analogy, the one word is used to refer to something common to the two things compared.
3. "What is x?" is answered by "something", and ultimately by the most common aspect of everything, being.
4. "Analogical use, then, must ultimately reduce to a solid univocal core of meaning as its justification."
5. Analogy as a matter of logic.
6. Naming God: removing created imperfections from terms.

Aquinas:

1. Analogy does not refer to something common which things share.
2. The question of analogy leads us from metaphysics (the being question) to epistemology (what are we doing when we question being) to anthropology (what must man be like to so question).
3. "What is x?" leads to "Why is x?" - existing is intelligible, and reference to God satisfies a basic quest for intelligibility.
4. The key to analogy is not in logic, but in self-awareness, an awareness of the basic impulse to "inquire into the intelligibility of beings;" - a concern for "the fulfillment-dimension of human understanding."
5. Naming God: the use of perfections shows a concern for the fulfillment aspect - which becomes not a matter of logic, but of intentionality, even of will. Analogy is drawing on some basic finality in the human will.
6. (James Anderson: analogy is not a logical procedure, but the metaphysical principle.)

Conclusion: Scotus' theory relies basically on the image of looking at two things, sizing them up, seeing what they have in common.

Aquinas' theory relies basically on the more subtle task of looking at the looking - what's going on in every act of looking?

Some notes on Tyrrell's Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God

I) If being is completely intelligible, then God exists.
Being is completely intelligible. Therefore, God exists.

II) Stages in the development of the affirmation.

- 1) The de facto structure of human knowing.
- 2) The real is known in, and only in, true judgements (i.e., correct understanding).
- 3) Being which is proportionate to human knowing has a structure isomorphic to the structure of human knowing.
- 4) The constituting ground of human knowing is an unrestricted desire to know.
- 5) Being is the objective of that unrestricted desire to know.
- 6) The real is being.
- 7) Being (and therefore, the real) is completely intelligible (is intrinsically intelligible).
- 8) Complete intelligibility implies an unrestricted act of understanding.
- 9) The existence of contingent beings (e.g., proportionate being; or "A is; B is; A is not B; A is a knower"), with 7) and 8), implies the existence of an unrestricted act of understanding.
- 10) Since the attributes of that unrestricted act of understanding are the attributes of God, God exists.

III) The key is the extrapolation of a restricted act to an unrestricted act of understanding.

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