

## How Yves Simon Trumps Cajetan on Analogy

John C. Cahalan

Copyright 2007 by John C. Cahalan (permission to copy is granted)

Simon's "On Order in Analogical Sets" is the most original contribution to the question why being is not a genus since Aristotle. Its originality might be obscured by Simon's presenting his analysis under the heading of Cajetan's "analogy of proper proportionality." But Simon's analysis is independent of, and escapes any criticism of, Cajetan's because it operates on the level of this most fundamental question about analogy.

Simon saw that what distinguishes being from a genus has to be more than the fact that being, unlike a genus, is predicable of all the differences between beings. The difference of red from other colors is not a color; "a color" expresses the logical unit containing what is expressed by "color" and what differentiates the color red. But the difference of one kind of being from another must itself be a being; otherwise it is nothing. What enables a genus to express similarity between its instances is abstraction, not the psychological act of abstraction, but an objective concept's logical property of including some intelligible values belonging to its instances while not including others. Because animal leaves out certain features of its instances, it expresses a similarity between dogs and cats. Because it does not leave out other features, it expresses a difference between dogs and roses. To the extent that none of the features of things are left out of being, being does not abstract from differences between things. But the failure to abstract from their differences prevents a genus from expressing similarity between things. So insofar as being does not abstract from differences, it must, unlike a genus, express not only similarity but also difference between kinds of being.

When things are similar, we can assert the same predicate of each: "Dogs are animals and cats are animals." When they differ, we can assert a predicate of one and deny it of the other: "Dogs are animals and roses are not animals." Once a genus is predicated of its instances, the genus has expressed their similarity. To express a dissimilarity, we must affirm of one and deny of another something other than the genus. Being is a value with respect to which its instances are both similar and dissimilar. They are similar in that they are beings. But since being is also something with respect to which things differ, it must be affirmable of some things and deniable of others. If it were merely predicable of the differences between things, it would exclusively be something with respect to which those differences themselves are similar, just as a genus is something with respect to which its instances are similar. Since being must be both a common ground and a difference between kinds of beings, we must be able to express their difference by denying being of some of the same things of which it is affirmed.

The simultaneous affirmation and negation of the analogue being cannot be an outright contradiction; therefore, the negation must amount to a restricting, an abatement of the common ground. Insofar as a genus abstracts from differences, the predication of differences does not make the species more or less instances of the genus. In the order of reality, a human being is a higher animal than a dog; in the logical order of concepts and statements, a human being is not more of an instance of the genus, animal, than a dog, just as the scalene is not more of a triangle than the isosceles. But that which exists in itself is more of the common value, that which exists, than that which does not exist in itself. Since the common ground between substance and accident cannot abstract from their differences, the expression of their differences must amount

to a re-affirmation of the common ground in one case and a restricting negation of the common ground in the other. In the order of logic, one member of the set has priority over the other with respect to the predication of the common ground. Unlike specific differences, the differences between substance and accident (“exists in itself” and “does not exist in itself” — not just “in itself” or “not in itself”) express the fact that one is more of an instance of the common ground than the other since the differences strengthen the affirmation and weaken the affirmation, respectively, of the analogue. Incomplete abstraction, not proportionality as such, makes being non-generic.

Simon discovered, then, that there are intelligible objects that, unlike genera, are logically *orderable* with respect to such priority and posteriority in the predication of an otherwise common value. He recognized that the main concepts of philosophy are thus analogically orderable. Those concepts are “ontological.” That is, while being is common to all things, philosophy uses the concept of being and its cognates, especially *existence* and *that which* exists, to express what distinguishes one member of a set (substance/accident, act/potency, cause/effect, the necessary/the contingent, the entitative/ the intentional, real being/being of reason, privation/negation, etc.) from another. Since being is not a genus, philosophy’s other main concepts will be analogically orderable also. Many analogical sets other than those Simon explicitly mentions as such are crucial to his work. And it can be shown that the central concepts of Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics are analogues predicable of orderable sets of analogates. Simon shows that one of these analogical sets is this: abstraction that abstracts completely/abstraction that does not abstract completely.

In addition to its importance for explaining how being and other concepts differ from genera, the unavoidable co-presence of assertion and negation in the use of analogues explains a constant thorn in the side of metaphysicians: paradoxes, apparent contradictions. Some philosophers have found the prevalence of paradox a reason for declaring metaphysics invalid, but they fall into self-referential inconsistency when they reject it. Simon for the first time explains metaphysical paradox in a way consistent with the validity of metaphysics. And he does so not by any ad hoc hypothesis, but by drawing consequences from one of the most ancient and fundamental insights of metaphysicians into their own enterprise.

#### Appendix on Terminology

Given the importance of this kind of abstraction, we need better terms for it than the bland and opaque “incomplete” and “imperfect” abstraction. If you wish to retain the vocabulary of “analogy” (which I argue against in Causal Realism, Ch. 11), you can call it “analogical abstraction” as opposed to “univocal abstraction.” That has the advantage of indicating that in the type of analogy involved there is a kind of unity of abstraction, while in analogy by attribution there is not.

But for the reasons given in Causal Realism, I there suggested “paralogical” abstraction, and so “paralogue” instead of “analogue” for that which is abstracted (e.g., being), and “paralogates” instead of “analogates” for the kinds (e.g., substance and accident) from which it imperfectly abstracts. I now see that “parageneric” would be a less ambiguous term for the abstraction. Correspondingly, that which is abstracted would be a “paragenus.”

“Paraspecies” would be no less awkward than “paralogate.” But we really don’t need either, since we can simply call the logical inferiors of the paragenus “species.” The reason is that while the logical relation of imperfect abstraction holds between a paragenus and its logical inferiors, the inferiors themselves need not be imperfectly abstracted from their inferiors; the

inferiors of a paragenus might themselves be “perfectly” abstracted. That is, the terms that express the inferiors of the paragenus might themselves be univocal. If so, we would not need to use the vocabulary either of the “analogical” or the “parageneric” for them. For example, in Aristotle the inferiors of “accident” are nine genera; if so, their names are univocal.

Accident is a “species” relative to the “paragenus” being. But is accident a genus or paragenus relative to its “species,” the nine categories? If it is “paragenerically” abstracted from them, we must be able to set up descending 2-member analogical sets encompassing them. For example, “accident” might be said analogically of quantity (univocal) and such-and-such (which would be something analogically common to all the other accidents); “such-and-such” itself might be said analogically of quality (univocal) and accidents-involving-relations; “accident-involving-relation” might be said analogically of relation itself (univocal, since “relation” is here used only for categorical relations) and the accidents-based-on-relations; etc.

All of this is independent of whether the “analogy of being” extends all the way to individual acts of existence. Even if it does, we would still have to account for the analogical relation between “being” and general terms like “substance” and “accident.” That is what Simon’s concept of order in analogical sets does.

Finally, always remember that analogy is NOT Aquinas’s solution to the problem of religious language (see Causal Realism). His solution is the doctrine of pure and mixed perfections (I KNOW these are not his own terms) and the doctrine that act is limited only by potency, both doctrines concerning characteristics of objects in their existence as things, not as objects, while the doctrine of analogy concerns objects as objects (the doctrine of analogical causes is an extension of the original terminology to describe things as things).