

“Divine Person” as Analogous Name

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The position of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Thomistic school that human beings cannot name God and creatures univocally is well-known.¹ This includes the term “person,” which is predicated of the Trinity, of angels, and of human beings truly but analogically. In contrast, it might seem that, when speaking of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in respect of *one another*, “divine person” must be univocal.²

¹ There are numerous (conflicting) studies of Aquinas on analogy, including Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy Between God and the World: An Investigation of its Background and Interpretation of its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1952); Cornelio Fabro, *Partecipazione e causalità secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1960); George P. Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Ralph McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy: An Interpretation of St. Thomas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961); Bernard Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après Saint Thomas D'Aquin*, *Philosophes médiévaux* 6 (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1963); McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996); John Mortenson, *Understanding St. Thomas on Analogy* (Irvine, CA: Universal Publishers, 2007). For an overview of important developments within the Thomistic commentatorial tradition, see Domenic D'Ettore, *Analogy after Aquinas: Logical Problems, Thomistic Answers*, *Thomistic Ressourcement* 11 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2019). I am grateful to Joseph L. Shetler, Ulrich Lehner, and Joshua P. Hochschild for their feedback on an earlier draft of this article.

² See, e.g., Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 124–25: “They are not persons in different ways, nor is there an analogical notion of personhood between the three; the notion of person is absolutely identical for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. . . . Indeed, if the persons did not have the same *ratio* of personhood, there would be no basis for saying that there are three ‘persons’ in God.”

The seventeenth-century Discalced Carmelites of Salamanca (the Salmanticenses) thought otherwise. They argued that the *ratio*³ of “divine person” is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit not univocally, but analogically, and that this follows from established Thomistic principles.⁴ Their position makes for an interesting case study in religious language, as the Salmanticenses apply a highly developed material logic to the central mystery of Christian faith.

Words, Concepts, and Things

In *On Interpretation* (*Peri hermeneias*), Aristotle explains that words immediately signify concepts and, by means of concepts, things.⁵ This so-called “semantic triangle” makes it easy to misunderstand univocity and analogy if we do not first determine how a particular thinker conceives of the relationship among words, concepts, and things. To discern how the Salmanticenses understood this relationship, it is most helpful to look to their counterparts, the Discalced Carmelites at neighboring Alcalá de Henares outside Madrid, commonly called the Complutenses.⁶ The Complutenses’ *Artium cursus*

³ *Ratio*, of course, has many meanings. Throughout this discussion, it usually refers to an intelligible account or concept.

⁴ The principal source for this argument is Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, in *Collegii Salmanticensis fr. Discalceatorum b. Mariae de Monte Carmelo parenti suo Eliae consecrati, cursus theologicus, Summam theologicam Angeli Doctoris d. Thomae complectens*, vol. 3, editio nova correcta (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1877), 434–44. The Salmanticenses’ enormous *Cursus theologicus* was summarized by Pablo de la Concepción, OCD (1666–1734), in four volumes. The relevant section of Pablo’s work is *Tractatus theologici*, tract. 6, disp. 3, dub. 2, §6, nos. 44–46, in *Tractatus theologici iuxta miram D. Thomae et Cursus Salmanticensis Ff. Discalceatorum b. Mariae de Monte Carmeli primitivae observantiae doctrinam*, vol. 2 (Parma: Haeredes Pauli Monti, 1725), 46–47. Although I summarize and explain the Salmanticenses’ teaching, I also use arguments, examples, and observations of my own. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁵ Aristotle, *De interpretatione* 16a4–9.

⁶ The Salmanticenses frequently refer to the Complutenses. In fact, some of the same people worked on both the *Artium cursus* (*Artium cursus sive disputationes in Aristotelis dialecticam, et philosophiam naturalem* [Alcalá de Henares, Spain: Ioannes de Orduña, 1624]) and the *Cursus theologicus*, such as Antonio de la Madre de Dios, OCD (1583–1637), and Juan de la Anunciación, OCD (1633–1701). Antonio de la Madre de Dios not only contributed a large part of the *Artium cursus*, he also authored the first volumes of the *Cursus theologicus*, including the disputations on the Trinity. For an overview of the history, see Enrique Llamas Martínez, “El colegio de San Elías y los Salmanticenses,” in *Historia de la Universidad de Salamanca*, vol. 1 (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2002), 687–704.

serves as philosophical handmaid to the Salmanticenses' *Cursus theologicus*, and is therefore essential for correctly interpreting the latter's claims about grammar, logic, and metaphysics.⁷

To begin with the verbal element, this is how the Complutenses, following a fairly typical account, explain the difference between a vocal sound, a name, and a term: A vocal sound (*vox*) is speech considered simply as an audible phenomenon, the pure sound wave. A name (*nomen*) is a vocal sound that signifies something. A term (*terminus*) is a name insofar as it serves as one end of a proposition.⁸ Terms may be purely mental (as when a proposition is conceived of in the mind alone), or they may be spoken or written.

Names and terms are useful precisely because they signify. The Complutenses define "signifying" (*significare*) as "representing to the knowing power something other than [the signifier] itself."⁹ A name or term points beyond itself so that something else can become known to the mind through that name or term.

When it comes to spoken (or written) terms, a term is "common" (*communis*) if it signifies more than one thing. Common terms may be "non-transcendent" (*non transcendens*) or "transcendent" (*transcendens*). Common terms are non-transcendent if they are predicated of certain things (such as "man" or "animal"). They are transcendent if they are predicated of all things. Six terms are usually acknowledged to be transcendent: "being" (*ens*); "thing" (*res*); "true" (*verum*); "good" (*bonum*); "something" (*aliquid*); and "one" (*unum*).¹⁰

⁷ While the Salmanticenses strive to be strict followers of Aquinas, we cannot expect their understanding of univocity and analogy to be a clone of the Angelic Doctor's. The surveys of Aquinas on analogy cited above show just how hard it is to resolve questions about what Aquinas himself thought, whether he was faithful to Aristotle, whether he changed his mind, whether commentators (e.g., Cajetan) distorted his doctrine beyond recognition, and so forth. Add to this that the Salmanticenses are writing after four hundred years of further developments, changes in terminology, and challenges from competing schools of thought requiring a response from Thomists. In short, to understand the Salmanticenses' theological claim, we must afford them the courtesy of exploring univocal and analogical predication on their own terms.

⁸ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, bk. 1, ch. 2 (p. 18).

⁹ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, bk. 1, ch. 1: "Potentiae cognoscitivae aliud a se repraesentare" (p. 15). The general form of this definition is fairly common among seventeenth-century philosophers; see Stephan Meier-Oeser, *Die Spur des Zeichens: das Zeichen und seine Funktion in der Philosophie des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), 178n18.

¹⁰ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, bk. 1, ch. 4 (p. 22).

Here it is necessary to distinguish first and second “intention” (*intentio*).¹¹ The Carmelites take “first intention” properly to be the act whereby the intellect knows things in accord with what is in them as realities.¹² This act of the intellect is the “formal first intention,” while the thing known is the “objective first intention.” A name signifying a thing in this way is a “name of first intention.”

But the intellect can also attend to those things not in accord with what is in them from their own perspective as realities, but instead with reference to their character *as acted upon by the intellect itself*. This act is called “second intention.”¹³ An example of first intention is the intellect’s knowing that “man is an animal,” whereas an example of second intention is its knowing that “‘animal’ is a genus.”

The Complutenses stress that first and second intention are, properly speaking, *acts* of the intellect—distinct ways of attending to what it knows—even though logicians often use “first intention” and “second intention” as shorthand to refer to the objects of these acts.¹⁴ In fact, because objective second intentions (the objects of the intellect’s second-intentional acts) are beings of reason (*entia rationis*), logicians sometimes refer to *all* beings of reason under the umbrella of “second intention.” Although common, the Carmelites judge this practice to be “quite improper.”¹⁵

It is second intentions that constitute the proper object of logic.¹⁶ More precisely, insofar as second intentions lead to knowledge of the truth, they form the adequate *formal* object of logic. This includes primarily and principally those second intentions founded on things, and secondarily those founded on vocal sounds.¹⁷ Now, while objective second intentions are

¹¹ Different thinkers have understood first and second intention differently and have used the terminology in a variety of ways.

¹² Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 2, q. 5, no. 40: “secundum id, quod habent a parte rei” (p. 180).

¹³ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 2, q. 5, no. 40: “not according to what applies to them on the part of the thing but according to what they have from the operation of the intellect [non secundum ea, quae conveniunt illis a parte rei, sed secundum ea, quae habent ab operatione eiusdem intellectus]” (p. 180). This act is formal second intention; the thing known with this kind of (mental) existence is the objective second intention; the names signifying things with respect to this kind of (mental) existence are names of second intention (e.g., “genus”).

¹⁴ They take the grammatical form of the Latin word *intentio* quite literally as the *act* of forming a concept.

¹⁵ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 2, q. 5, no. 44: “Haec acceptio secundae intentionis valde impropria est” (p. 183).

¹⁶ Medieval and early-modern “logic” encompasses what today is called “semantics.”

¹⁷ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 1, q. 3, no. 31: “A logical being of reason or second

beings of reason, formal first and second intentions, being the very acts of the intellect, are real. Because of the correspondence between formal and objective concepts within those acts, formal first and second intentions based on real beings *do* reflect how those beings really are. Thus, the *material* object of logic consists of "things and vocal sounds in respect of their real being," though by way of second intentions.¹⁸ Hence, although logic deals directly with second intentions, it can reach back through second intentions to first intentions and to the real world. We must distinguish the grammatical, logical, and metaphysical orders without divorcing them.¹⁹

Univocal Predication

When a term is predicated of two subjects, those predications can be compared.²⁰ The term that appears in both predications can apply to them univocally, purely equivocally, or analogically. In the case of pure equivocation, the two instances of the term are not the same or related in any meaningful sense, and so pure equivocation really involves no commonality of terms, even if the same sounds and the same string of letters occurs in

intention, either indicative of the truth or else a way of knowing taken in the broad sense as inclusive of all logical second intentions even those founded on vocal sounds, is the adequate object or *ratio formalis quae* of the object of Logic, granted that intentions founded on things are so primarily and principally, while those founded on vocal sounds are so secondarily and less principally. Still, they all pertain *per se* and not *per accidens* to the adequate object of Logic [Ens rationis logicum, sive secunda intentio, quae est veritatis ostensiva, vel modus sciendi late sumptus, prout comprehendit omnes secundas intentiones logicales, etiam eas quae fundantur in vocibus, est obiectum adaequatum, seu ratio formalis quae obiecti Logicae, licet intentiones, quae fundantur in rebus, primario, et principaliter; illae vero, quae fundantur in vocibus, secundario, et minus principaliter; omnes tamen per se, et non per accidens pertinent ad obiectum adaequatum Logicae]" (pp. 117–18).

¹⁸ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 1, q. 3, no. 33: "res et voces secundum suum esse reale" (p. 119).

¹⁹ Alan P. Darley, "Predication or Participation? What is the Nature of Aquinas' Doctrine of Analogy?," *The Heythrop Journal* 57, no. 2 (2016): 312–24; Gyula Klima, "Nominalist Semantics," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, revised ed., vol. 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 2014), 159–63.

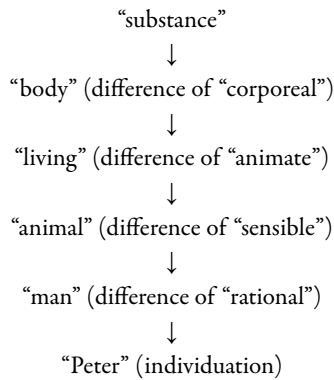
²⁰ Bl. John Duns Scotus forced subsequent discussions of univocity and analogy to give further attention to the role of concepts. Comparing two predications means comparing two *judgments* (the second act of the intellect), but judgment depends on *apprehension* (the first act of the intellect). It is necessary to consider both a concept and the propositional context in which a name or term corresponding to that concept occurs. See Joshua P. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan's De Nominum Analogia* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 47–64.

two predications. For example, in the sentences “the dog has a loud bark” and “the tree has rough bark,” the word “bark” is used purely equivocally. Its significance in one instance is unrelated to its significance in the other.

Conversely, univocal predication occurs when the repeated term has the exact same significance in both instances. For example, in the sentences “the dog Spot has a loud bark” and “the dog Stripe has a soft bark,” the word “bark” has the exact same significance in both instances. It is used univocally. So far, so good.

According to the Complutenses, univocal predication is possible because of the mind’s ability to grasp things in various ways and to consider these facets *hierarchically*. The hierarchical perspective means arranging the predicates that apply to a given individual on a scale. The classic way to do this is “the tree” of Porphyry.

The Porphyrian tree—often depicted in medieval and early-modern books of logic as a literal tree—organizes the scale of predicates along distinct lines from general to specific. For example, the individual man “Peter” can be schematized hierarchically as:



From top to bottom, each level of narrowing specificity arises because of a “difference” that divides the level above it.²¹ Thus, “substance” branches into “body” and “non-body” through the difference “corporeal” and its negation, “body” branches via the difference “animate” and its negation, and so forth. Everything above Peter in a straight line and the differences that define that

²¹ It is customary to refer to the level immediately above the individual as a “species” and each higher level as a “genus.” “Subaltern” genera are those that have a genus above as well as below them.

particular line can be predicated of him. And so, we can say that "Peter is a man," "Peter is an animal," "Peter is rational," and so on.

Univocal predication occurs when a given predicate is applied to more than one individual *and* those individuals fall beneath that predicate on the hierarchical scale. For example, "animal" is said univocally of Peter and of Brownie the donkey. Similarly, "body" is said univocally of Peter, Brownie, and a block of marble. Conversely, "animal" cannot be said univocally of Peter and of a tree.

From the hierarchical perspective, *univocals taken in themselves do not include what falls beneath them*. "Animal" applies univocally to both Peter and Brownie because, at its own level, "animal" includes *neither* "rational" *nor* "irrational." Only once "animal" has been narrowed by a difference ("rational" or its negation) do distinct lines branch off.

Universals and the Real Basis for Univocal Predication

Here we cannot escape mentioning the classic problem of universals. Of course it is impossible to rehearse the whole history of the issue or its nuances. To summarize the Carmelites' own view, there are two opposite positions to be rejected. One is denying real universal natures, a position they attribute to Heraclitus and Cratylus among ancient philosophers and to the nominalists among their contemporaries. The other is positing universal natures that really exist as separate from individuals, a view they attribute to Plato.²²

As expected, the Carmelites themselves are moderate realists. They hold that only individuals really exist in the world but that there is a real basis in individuals grounding the mind's universal concepts. Thus, the commonality of human nature in two individual men, such as Peter and Paul, allows "man" to be predicated of both univocally, and the commonality of animality in Peter and Brownie allows "animal" to be predicated of both univocally. In other words, in terms of the Porphyrian tree, whatever is at a level higher than the individual exists *as universal* only in the mind while being based in real individuals.

Individuals are the starting point. When the mind, through the senses, encounters real, concrete beings, it recognizes in them a complex of determinations. These determinations really exist only in combination. For example, wherever the mind encounters "animal" in the world, it is partnered with either rationality or irrationality. Every actual animal must be one or

²² Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 3, q. 1, nos. 5–9 (pp. 189–94).

the other. And yet, the mind spontaneously grasps the universal concept “animal” and applies it univocally to all animals. On the moderate-realist view, the mind’s ability to do this must begin with something really in the individuals themselves.²³

Now, in individuals there is no real distinction of levels such as “body,” “animal,” and “man.” If there were, every individual would have many substantial forms. Instead, an individual’s single substantial form contains in a unified way all the degrees of perfection reflected by the hierarchy of predicates that apply to it. These degrees of perfection or metaphysical grades, as they exist concretely in the individual, are not *really* distinct, though, according to the usual Thomistic opinion, they are *virtually* distinct. As Aquinas puts it:

The more perfect form virtually contains whatever belongs to the lower forms. And thus, being one and the same, it perfects matter according to different grades of perfection. For it is one and the same form essentially whereby a man is actually a being, a body, living, animal, and man.²⁴

The mind can consider a single metaphysical grade in an individual without considering others.²⁵ For example, it can consider Peter’s corporeality without attending to his animality, even though *in Peter* there are not really distinct forms of “being a body” and “being an animal.” And, when the mind distinguishes between Peter’s being a body and his being an animal, this is not a merely conceptual distinction; it is a virtual distinction, a conceptual distinction *based in reality*.²⁶

Virtual distinction allows for univocal predication that says something about reality. Peter contains virtually distinct metaphysical grades of

²³ See Bernard M. Flynn, “The Notion of Formal Logic,” *Laval théologique et philosophique* 2, no. 1 (1946): 181–83.

²⁴ *Summa theologiae* [ST] I, q. 76, a. 6, ad 1 (Leonine ed., 5:229).

²⁵ ST I, q. 76, a. 3, ad 4: “Because . . . the intellective soul virtually contains what the sensitive soul possesses and still more, reason can consider what pertains to the power of the sensitive soul on its own as something imperfect and material. And because it finds this to be common to man and other animals, it thereby forms the *ratio* of the genus” (Leonine ed., 5:221).

²⁶ Merely conceptual distinctions are also called distinctions *rationalis ratiocinantis*, while conceptual distinctions *cum fundamento in re* are called distinctions *rationalis ratiocinatae*. An example of a merely conceptual distinction is when the mind considers that “Peter is Peter,” where there is no real basis for distinguishing Peter as subject from Peter as predicate.

ascending generality. So does Paul. Just as the mind has a real basis for abstracting the universal notion of "man" from Peter, so it does for Paul. When the mind then compares these two predications ("Peter is a man" and "Paul is a man"), it finds that "man" applies univocally, and we rightly conclude that this says something about the real individuals, Peter and Paul, not just about words or mental concepts.

This is where the distinction between the *formal* and the *objective* concept comes in. The formal concept is the concept of some object as it is in the mind itself in the particular way it is conceived of. The objective concept is that which is really in the object whereby the mind is able to form such a formal concept of the object. As noted, the mind can conceive of a single object under various formalities (e.g., conceiving of Peter as animal without attending to his rationality). Hence, multiple formal concepts may refer to the same real object.²⁷ This is how the univocity of "animal" in respect of Peter and Brownie can be a claim *about Peter and Brownie*. The mind's formal concept of "animal" corresponds to the objective concept of animality that really exists in both Peter and Brownie.

Analogical Predication

This brings us to analogy. Following in the tradition of Tomasso de Vio Cajetan, the Carmelites define analogs as "what have a common name, while the *ratio* of the substance that goes with that name is partly the same and partly different."²⁸ This can happen in different ways, and so some distinctions are needed. The most important distinction is between "physical analogy" and "logical analogy."

Physical analogy (what Cajetan calls "analogy of inequality") is when analogs have a common name and *ratio* but participate in that *ratio* to greater or lesser extent in their real being. Crucially, cases of physical analogy may well count as univocity from a logical perspective.²⁹ For example, on the Aristotelian view, heavenly bodies are incorruptible. Hence they are bodies

²⁷ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 3, q. 1, no. 4 (p. 189).

²⁸ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 10, q. 1, no. 4: "Analogia sunt, quorum nomen est commune, ratio vero substantiae secundum illud nomen partim est eadem, et partim diversa" (p. 405). Cf. Cajetan, *De nominum analogia*, ch. 1, no. 4; ch. 2, no. 8; ch. 3, no. 23. The Carmelites' treatment of analogy is indebted to Cajetan throughout.

²⁹ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 10, q. 1, nos. 1–5 (pp. 404–7); Aquinas, *In I sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1 (*Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, ed. nova, vol. 1, ed. R. P. Mandonnet [Paris: Sumptibus P. Lethielleux, 1929], 492); *In Boetium De Trinitate* II, q. 4, a. 2, corp.; III, q. 6, a. 3, corp.; *In X metaphys.*, lec. 12, no. 8; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 7, ad sc 1; Cajetan, *De nominum analogia*, ch. 1, nos. 4–5.

in a more perfect way than animals, while animals are bodies more perfectly than plants, and plants more than minerals. From this perspective, “body” is said analogically of heavenly bodies, animals, plants, and minerals, since all have the same *ratio* of “body” but do not participate in it equally.

The present discussion is not concerned with physical analogy, only with logical analogy. Here, too, the *ratio* of the substance signified by the common name must be partly the same and partly different. There are three ways this could occur: equally the same and different; more same than different; more different than same.³⁰ The third view, they argue, is correct. Thus, logical analogy is properly that in which the analogs “have a common name, while the *ratio* of the substance that goes with that name is different *simpliciter* and the same *secundum quid*.”³¹

This is how analogy is a middle way between univocation and pure equivocation. The former means a common name with a totally identical *ratio*, while the latter means a common name with totally different *rationes*. The two major classes of logical analogy are analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality.³²

Analogy of attribution can occur in two ways. The first way is when the analogous name is compared to the prime analog (that in which the *ratio* signified by the name essentially exists), on the one hand, and to the derivative analog, on the other, as when “healthy” is compared to an animal (in which health essentially exists) and to medicine and urine (which are a cause and an indication of health). The second way is when the analogous name is compared to only the derivative analogs, as when “healthy” is compared first to medicine and then to urine.

Analogy of proportionality occurs when analogous names “have a common name, while the *ratio* of the substance that goes with that name is similar by proportion.”³³ An example is “seeing” when said of bodily vision and of intellectual vision. The common name “seeing” applies to both cases by proportion, since just as bodily vision shows something to the senses,

³⁰ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 10, q. 1, nos. 5–6 (pp. 405–6).

³¹ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 10, q. 1, no. 6: “Analogia sunt, quorum nomen est commune, ratio vero substantiae secundum illud nomen simpliciter est diversa, et secundum quid eadem” (p. 406).

³² Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 10, q. 2, nos. 8–13 (pp. 406–9). Aquinas also acknowledged both analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality as legitimate forms of analogy, as Joshua P. Hochschild shows in “Proportionality and Divine Naming: Did St. Thomas Change His Mind about Analogy?,” *The Thomist* 77, no. 4 (2013): 531–58.

³³ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 10, q. 2, no. 12: “quorum nomen est commune, ratio vero substantiae secundum illud nomen, est similis secundum proportionem” (p. 408).

understanding shows it to the mind. Analogy of proportionality thus involves four terms: $A : B :: C : D$.

Analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality differ in how the *ratio* signified is found in the analogs. In analogy of attribution, the *ratio* signified by the common name is found intrinsically and formally only in the prime analog, whereas in analogy of proportionality, the *ratio* is found in each analog intrinsically.³⁴ This makes analogy of proportionality "much nobler" (*multo nobilior*) than analogy of attribution, though both count as true instances of logical analogy.³⁵

Once again, it is crucial to grasp that, by using words like "intrinsically," neither the Carmelites nor Cajetan, whom they are following, mean to shift the discussion out of the domain of logic. The point being made is still about concepts.³⁶ The *concept* of "healthy" in medicine (or urine) depends upon the *concept* of "healthy" in the animal body. In contrast, the *concept* of mental understanding in "seeing" does not depend upon the *concept* of physical sight. A person born blind, for instance, may well use colloquial expressions like "I see" to mean "I understand" without confusion.

A *Ratio* of "Divine Person"?

Although human beings in the wayfaring state typically have no direct experience of God, the human mind can still form a concept of "divine person," drawing on both faith and reason. As Aquinas argues, the mind can attain a *ratio* even of things without definition and even of things beyond human experience, such as divine attributes.³⁷ In fact, if the mind cannot do this, then it is impossible to say anything true about God, since words signify realities only by means of concepts. If the mind's *ratio* of "divine person" does not correspond to anything real in God whatsoever, then affirmative propositions about the divine persons are always false. This cannot be the case, since it would negate even the most basic dogmas of faith.

The Salmanticenses' claim about "divine person" is directly a *logical* claim.

³⁴ Speaking of analogy of *proper* proportionality, that is. Analogy of proportionality can also be *improper* (metaphorical), in which case the *ratio* is found in the metaphorical analog only extrinsically. Thus, to use a classic example of Latin metaphor, a burgeoning meadow is said to "smile," since, as a smile brightens the face in a pleasant way, the flourishing of a meadow brightens it in a pleasant way. This is metaphorical because it is the idea of the human being that includes the idea of smiling intrinsically, whereas the idea of a meadow does not.

³⁵ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 10, q. 2, no. 12 (p. Orduña, 409).

³⁶ Hochschild, *Semantics of Analogy*, 110–21.

³⁷ *ST* I, q. 13, a. 4 (Leonine ed., 4:144–45); *In I sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 (p. 63–72).

It is a claim about what sort of *ratio* the theologizing mind properly forms. However, the basis for this claim is partly metaphysical, since the concept of “divine person,” if it is to be accurate—even though it can never be perfectly clear and adequate to the reality—has to answer to certain things that are known to be true of God, such as his simplicity and unity.

According to Aquinas, “person” is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.³⁸ This is not a real commonality (*communitas rei*), but a conceptual commonality (*communitas rationis*). “Person” is not a thing that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit mutually possess, like the divine essence. In fact, for Aquinas, even to two human beings “person” is common not by real commonality but by conceptual commonality. Peter and Paul do not share a single real personhood, though each, being an individual of a rational nature, is a person. “Person” is not a genus, nor is it a specific difference. Instead, it signifies after the manner of *individuum vagum* (“nondescript individual”), meaning that “person” indicates the fact of concrete, individual existence. All the more, then, is it the case in God that “person” is not a genus or any kind of universal. Nor does “person” signify only something negative, such as incommunicability.³⁹ It signifies a positive perfection: the fact of individual subsistence in a rational nature.

Why “Divine Person” Is Predicated Analogically, Not Univocally

Having summarized the Carmelites’ view of logical analogy, it is at last possible to present their arguments for why “divine person” is said analogically in respect of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Now, the Father, Son, and Spirit are really identical with the singular divinity, whereas they are distinct in their personhoods. Thus, what is at issue in the name “divine person” is not the *ratio* of “divine,” but instead that of “person” as qualified by “divine.” Granted that they are all divine, how does the *ratio* of “person” apply to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in comparison to one another?⁴⁰

³⁸ *In I sent.*, d. 25 q. 1 a. 3 (pp. 608–10); *ST I*, q. 30, a. 4 (Leonine ed., 4:341).

³⁹ As Richard of St. Victor had suggested.

⁴⁰ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, no. 107: “As for the name ‘divine person,’ we do not understand it from the perspective of the divinity it adds on the basis of the divine nature, but instead from the perspective of its differentiating or subaltern *ratio* directly contained under the *ratio* of ‘person’ as such, abstracting from ‘created’ and ‘uncreated,’ which, together with the *ratio* of ‘person’ as such, immediately descends to the three relative persons found in God [Nomine autem personae divinae non intelligimus eam secundum id divinitatis, quod ex parte naturae divinae affert, sed secundum illam suam rationem differentialem veluti subalternam directe contentam sub ratione personae ut sic, abstrahentis a creata et increata, quae una cum ratione personae

In a nutshell, the Salmanticenses' reply is that, "since the three divine persons considered in their particular *rationes* do not exist through really distinct existences, but instead, through one and the same *esse* of the divine essence, . . . the *ratio* of 'divine person' is not common univocally in respect of the aforementioned persons."⁴¹ This argument includes both metaphysical and logical elements. It is because of the real existential constitution of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that "divine person" cannot be even conceptually univocal.⁴²

The common *ratio* of "divine person" cannot be totally abstracted from the particularities of each person, which would be necessary for univocity.⁴³ Abstraction to the point of allowing for univocity would make "divine person" into a genus or some kind of universal. This, in turn, would require the divine persons to have distinct acts of existence, since, as Aquinas says, "genus and species, as well as every universal, is predicated of more than one in respect of different *esse*."⁴⁴ To be more precise, at least when a common, univocal *ratio* is complete at its own level but narrowed at a lower level by more specific, differentiating *rationes* to yield complete, concrete beings, those beings must exist through distinct acts of existence.

In other words, if the *ratio* of "divine person" were univocal, it could be schematized like this:

"divine person"		
↓(difference of "paternity")	↓(difference of "filiation")	↓(difference of "passive spiration")
Father	Son	Holy Spirit

This would make the *rationes* of "paternity," "filiation," and "passive spiration" into differences further specifying the universal "divine person." Thus,

ut sic immediate descendit ad tres personas relativas in divinis repertas]" (p. 435).

⁴¹ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §2, no. 110: "Quoniam tres personae divinae secundum suas particulares rationes consideratae non existunt per existentias realiter distinctas, sed per unicum et idem *esse* divinae essentiae, . . . ergo ratio personae divinae non est communis univoce respectu praedictarum personarum" (p. 436).

⁴² Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §1, no. 109: "Haec autem ratio etiam probat, non dari in divinis rationem univocam communem communitate rationis respectu divinarum personarum" (p. 435).

⁴³ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §1, no. 109 (p. 435).

⁴⁴ ST I, q. 30, a. 4, ad 3 (Leonine ed., 4:341). Aquinas had made the same remark earlier in his career in *In I sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 3, corp.: "Every universal is in accord with distinct *esse* in the things that fall under it" (p. 610).

just as “animal” can be predicated univocally as a universal, since the *ratio* of “animal” can be abstracted from any further determinations, so could “divine person.”

The problem is that “animal” is a universal precisely because its conceptual commonality comes from the metaphysical composition that exists in particular animals. As explained above, it is the virtual distinction between metaphysical grades (such as “animal” and “man”) within individuals that allows the mind to abstract the universal “animal” and predicate it univocally of both Peter and Brownie. Composition of genus and species, in turn, presupposes composition of essence and *esse*.⁴⁵ This is a principal reason why Aquinas argues that God cannot be in a genus.⁴⁶

Now, without threat to the divine simplicity, it is true that each divine person is virtually distinct from the divine essence.⁴⁷ While the Father, for example, does not differ from the divine essence *really*, there *is* a real basis for distinguishing the Father from the divine essence in our consideration. That basis is precisely that the Father, though he is the divine essence, is *not* the Son and *not* the Holy Spirit. Each divine person is really identical with the divine essence, which is really identical with the divine *esse*. Yet, the divine persons are really distinct from one another. Hence, with an eye toward their real distinction from one another, each divine person can be distinguished from the divine essence/*esse* virtually. The real distinction among the persons is the basis for the virtual distinction between a given divine person and the divine essence.

However, from the perspective of a given divine person, there is not even a virtual distinction between “being a divine person” and “being *this* divine person.” On the Thomistic view, which the Salmanticenses embrace, the divine persons are *relations as subsisting*, and so the constitution of a given person includes his unique relationality.⁴⁸ The human mind cannot prescind from the personal properties of a given divine person and still consider him as a person. As Aquinas says, “by paternity the Father is not only the Father but is a person and a *someone* or hypostasis.”⁴⁹ Thus, in the Father, the distinction between the *ratio* of “divine person” and the *ratio* of “Father” has no real foundation, and thus can be at most merely conceptual

⁴⁵ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 5, q. 6, no. 71 (p. 311). Essence-*esse* composition and matter-form composition are examples of what is sometimes called “physical” composition, whereas genus-species composition is “metaphysical” composition.

⁴⁶ ST I, q. 3, a. 5 (Leonine ed., 4:43–44).

⁴⁷ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 5, dub. 2, §2, no. 18 (p. 198–99).

⁴⁸ ST I, q. 29, a. 4 (Leonine ed., 4:333–34); I, q. 40, a. 1, ad 1 (4:411–12).

⁴⁹ ST I, q. 40, a. 3, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 4:417).

(*rationis ratiocinantis*).⁵⁰ The same is true, in the Son, of the *ratio* of "divine person" and the *ratio* of "Son." But, this means that, for the *ratio* of "divine person" to be univocal in respect of Father and Son, the *rationes* of "Father" and "Son" could themselves be only conceptually distinct, which would amount to Sabellianism.

The reason why univocity requires a distinction that is at least virtual is that a univocal *ratio* considered in itself does not actually contain—and in fact excludes—the narrower determinations that it has the potential to receive in individuals. A *ratio* that did not exclude the various further determinations to which it is susceptible could not be perfectly one, since it would then actually include contradictories, in which case it could not be univocal. For example, "animal" can be a univocal *ratio* in respect of Peter and Brownie only because, taken in itself, it excludes the specific differences of rationality and irrationality, and thus has the potential to be specified by either difference.⁵¹

In contrast, consider the example of "being" (*ens*). *Ens* is predicated of many kinds of individuals, such as God and creatures, substances and accidents, and so on. However, *ens* is not a genus, and so cannot be said univocally of all beings. Still, it is possible to form a formal concept of *ens*. This concept cannot perfectly prescind from all the particular modes of being covered by it. It includes these further determinations in a confused way. Hence, the formal concept of *ens* is analogical: It is formally one in an imperfect way, which is to say that it includes one *ratio secundum quid* but distinct *rationes simpliciter*.⁵² Thus, the formal concept of *ens* includes the narrower and more distinct ways of being that fall under it actually, though confusedly, not only potentially.

Therefore, a univocal name does not relate to its univocals in the way an analogous name relates to its analogs.⁵³ "Animal" requires the addition of differences that fall outside it in order to occur in Peter or Brownie. *Ens* does not, since whatever differentiates *ens* must exist, and so must fall under *ens* to begin with. "Animal" has to be narrowed by extrinsic addition in order to arrive at a final, concrete individual, whereas *ens* is narrowed by the explication of determinate modes that are already contained implicitly within it.

Wherever extrinsic addition is required for the common to extend to individuals, there is metaphysical composition and the underlying real

⁵⁰ ST I, q. 40, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 4:416–17); Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §3, nos. 119–22 (p. 439–40).

⁵¹ See Aquinas, *In I sent.*, d. 22, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2 (pp. 538–39).

⁵² Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 11, q. 5, no. 44 (p. 457).

⁵³ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §2, nos. 113–14 (p. 437).

composition of essence and *esse*. This cannot be the case in God. Hence, “divine person” considered as common cannot actually exclude the three persons’ unique personal properties, but instead must include them implicitly. This makes it a *ratio* that is diverse *simpliciter* but one *secundum quid*, which is another way of saying that it is analogous.

Another way to get at this is to suppose that the mind could form a concept of “divine person” so abstract as to exclude the personal properties of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If the mind does this, then the resulting *ratio* of “divine person” would not be limited to those three, and would, in fact, admit of an arbitrary number of divine persons. In this case, it is not a *ratio* derived from reason elevated by *faith*, but instead a creation of the mind alone. “Divine person” taken in this way is no longer a properly theological concept. It could apply univocally to any number of non-existent gods or subsisting relations in the way that “animal” applies univocally to Brownie the donkey and Sparkles the unicorn. The only way for the *ratio* of “divine person” to apply to the Father, Son, and Spirit and *only* to those three is for it to include their personal properties implicitly.

Does Analogy Always Mean Unequal Participation in the *Ratio*?

The preeminent Thomist and contemporary of the Salmanticenses, John of St. Thomas, agrees that the predication of “person” in respect of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be strictly univocal. But he also denies that it can apply strictly analogically. His reason for rejecting the analogical predication of “person” is that he thinks analogical predication always involves unequal participation in the *ratio*.⁵⁴ He admits that the common concept of “person” *does* possess an analogical mode in the sense that it is not a genus, but is instead like a transcendent concept in respect of what falls under it.⁵⁵

John addresses only analogy of attribution, where the predicate is found essentially only in the prime analog but is attributed to the other analogs in a derivative sense. This clearly has no place in the Trinity. It is true that, ontologically speaking, the Son originates from the Father. However, the

⁵⁴ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus in I Thomae*, q. 32, disp. 14, a. 1, no. 26, in *Admodum Reverendi et eximii Patris Joannis a S. Thoma . . . Cursus theologicus in Summam theologicam D. Thomae*, nova editio, vol. 4 (Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, 1884), 250.

⁵⁵ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus in I Thomae*, q. 32, disp. 14, a. 1, no. 26: “Still, it has the mode of an analog inasmuch as it is included in what falls under it and relates in a transcendent way to all lower modes [Habet tamen modum analogi, quantum ad hoc quod est includi in inferioribus et per modum transcendentis se habere ad omnes modos inferiores]” (p. 250).

concept of "divine person" applied to the Son is not derived from the concept of "divine person" applied to the Father in the way that the concept of "healthy" applied to urine *is* derived from the concept of "healthy" applied to the animal body. "Divine person" applies to Father and Son equally and non-derivatively, meaning that it cannot apply by analogy of attribution.

What about analogy of proportionality? Even in this nobler kind of analogy, there seems to be a dilemma: either there is inequality, or else there is no proportionality at all.⁵⁶ For example, consider "'accident' is to *ens*, as 'substance' is to *ens*." There is proportionality between the two relations, but the *ratio* of *ens* in "substance" and the *ratio* of *ens* in "accident" are not equal. Alternatively, consider "'donkey' is to 'animal,' as 'man' is to 'animal.'" In this latter case, there is no inequality, but neither is there proportionality. Instead, there is univocity, since the *ratio* of "animal" is absolutely identical in "man" and "donkey."

The Salmanticenses overcome this apparent dilemma by noting that the inequality of the first example arises not from analogy of proportionality *per se*, but from the concepts of substance and accident. There is nothing about analogy of proportionality that necessarily entails inequality. It all depends on the terms under consideration. Moreover, the dilemma's second horn falsely presupposes that equality can only be based on total agreement in mode, which is actually begging the question. In short, there is no reason to suppose that "the Father is to 'divine person' as the Son is to 'divine person'" implies inequality in their being divine persons or in the application of the concept of "divine person" to them. All it means is that each is a divine person in a way that is partly the same (subsisting in the divine nature) and partly different (being this particular relation that subsists in the divine nature).⁵⁷

Do the Salmanticenses Contradict Aquinas?

Now, there is a difficulty for the Salmanticenses. They pride themselves on being faithful Thomists, and yet Aquinas states: "Others say that there is a commonality by reason of proportion, as when we say that a captain is in the ship as a ruler is in a city. So they say that 'person' is something common to Father and Son, since as the Father is to 'subsisting with respect to the divine

⁵⁶ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §6, nos. 130–31 (p.443).

⁵⁷ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §6, nos. 132–33 (p. 444).

nature,' so also is the Son."⁵⁸ It seems as if Aquinas has already considered and rejected analogy of proportionality in the case of "divine person."

Is it really so? By careful analysis of the opinion Aquinas relates and rejects, the Salmanticenses show that what Aquinas disagrees with is not the affirmation that "divine person" is analogous *as such*, but rather the opinion that the analogous *ratio* is only a relation of reason or a second intention.⁵⁹ This clarifies the Salmanticenses' own position: "divine person" is a name that truly signifies and refers to the Father, Son, and Spirit concretely.⁶⁰ It is not just a derivative label.⁶¹ Nor is it merely a conceptual classifier like "genus." The predication of "divine person" is more like the predication of *ens*, which applies to concrete beings commonly but analogically.⁶² This is also why, even if a more abstract and conceptual term like *individuum vagum*

⁵⁸ Aquinas, *Super I Sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 3, corp. (p. 609).

⁵⁹ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §5, nos. 126–28 (pp. 441–42). Their reading of Aquinas is plausible, given that he goes on to explain in *In I sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 3, corp.: "Others say that there is an intentional commonality, like when it is said that 'color' and 'animal' agree in the intention of genus. But these two stated opinions refer to the same thing, since commonality of intentions is only in accord with the proportion of common to proper or vice versa. And this, too, seems insufficient. For 'person' does not name only an intention or the habitude of a subsistent to a common nature, like the names 'suppositum,' 'particular,' and other such names. Rather, it names that thing to which such an intention applies. Hence the commonality of 'person' in God cannot be in accord with the commonality of this sort of habitude or intention, but this is the commonality whereby the name 'suppositum' is common to the three persons" (p. 609).

⁶⁰ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §5, no. 128: "The commonality that 'divine person' indicates is a commonality of reason founded in reality, but it is not a commonality of such a kind that the *ratio* said to be common is only a relation of reason or a second intention [Communitas, quam dicit persona divina, est communitas rationis fundata in re; non vero est communitas talis conditionis, ut ratio, quae communis dicitur, solum sit aliqua relatio rationis, aut aliqua secunda intentio]" (p. 442).

⁶¹ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §4, no. 123: "The *ratio* of 'divine person,' though common in respect of the three divine persons only by analogy, is nevertheless said of them in a quidditative way (so to speak), that is, it pertains to the formal concept of them and is not something that applies to them in a denominative or quasi-denominative way [Rationem personae divinae, licet analogice tantum communem respectu trium personarum divinarum, nihilominus dici (ut sic loquamur) quidditative de illis, seu esse de conceptu formali earum; non vero aliquid denominative, aut veluti denominative eis conveniens]" (p. 440).

⁶² Confusingly, the example that Aquinas uses in this specific context is "animal." However, his point is not to affirm the univocity of "divine person," but only to give an example of conceptual commonality grounded in reality. See *In I sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 3, corp. (p. 609–10).

("nondescript individual") can be predicated of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit univocally, "divine person," a concrete term, cannot be.⁶³

Similarly, Aquinas's affirmation in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae* that "there is also the same common *ratio* of personhood in the three persons" does not contradict the Salmanticenses.⁶⁴ In that passage, Aquinas is speaking to the common ability of the Father, Son, and Spirit to assume a human nature, even though only the Son actually has. His point is simply that they are equal in the fact of being divine persons. And thus the *ratio* of "personhood" (*personalitas*) is the same in them. He does not state that the *ratio* of "person" is absolutely identical in them or that it is predicated univocally.

As the Salmanticenses have argued, the *ratio* of "person" is truly common and is the same *secundum quid*, though not *simpliciter*, in the Father, Son, and Spirit. This analogical commonality is enough to avoid the fallacy of equivocation and to verify propositions like "there are three divine persons."

Application to a Rahnerian Concern about the Incarnation

Karl Rahner argues that "person" must be considered an analogous name in the Trinity. His claim is that "the ways in which each person is a person are so different that they allow of only a *very loosely* analogical concept of person, as *equally* applicable to the three persons."⁶⁵ This goes hand in hand with Rahner's *Grundaxiom*, that "the 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity, and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity."⁶⁶

Rahner's concern is that the presence and action of the divine persons in the history of salvation be revelatory of their real personal distinction *per se*. This requires that they not be fungible in their acts *ad extra*, since that would destroy the self-communication and revelation of each person in his distinction. A prime example is Rahner's view that *only* the Son could become incarnate and that there is something about the Son that makes assuming human nature uniquely possible to him. In fact, Rahner highlights the Son's Incarnation precisely because it is a clear example of something in the economy of salvation that is unique to him and not merely

⁶³ Complutenses, *Artium cursus*, disp. 4, q. 6, no. 51 (p. 259–60); Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 6, disp. 10, dub. 5, §4, no. 125 (p. 441).

⁶⁴ *ST* III, q. 3, a. 5, corp. (Leonine ed., 11:63).

⁶⁵ Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Crossroad, 2004), 29. See also 104–6 and Rahner, "Divine Trinity," in *Sacramentum mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner et al., 6 vols. (New York: Herder, 1970), 6:298.

⁶⁶ Rahner, *The Trinity*, 22.

an appropriation. Rahner fears that the traditional presumption that any of the divine persons could have been incarnate entails a univocity that renders the three persons generic and interchangeable.

The Salmanticenses show that one can hold the traditionally Thomistic view that any of the divine persons could have become incarnate without thereby being committed to the view that “divine person” applies to them univocally. The commonality of the analogous *ratio* safeguards both the unity of the divine nature and the radical distinction of personal properties. As the Salmanticenses explain,

it is clear that the grace of union God intended, that which actually exists, was as such meant to be terminated in the person of the Word not in terms of the general concept of subsistence or divine personhood, but in the determinate way that that person in particular is the natural Son of God.⁶⁷

Thus, the Salmanticenses affirm the distinctly filial character of the Son’s Incarnation. God did not just will that a divine person would become flesh, but that *the Word* would become flesh. Still, holding this does not require denying God’s power to have realized incarnations of the Father or Spirit. Such incarnations and their resulting hypostatic unions would be radically different from the actual Incarnation because of the distinction of personal properties.⁶⁸

The Son’s Incarnation is filial and revelatory of him as the Son because he is a divine person precisely by being subsisting natural divine filiation. In him there is not even a virtual distinction between being a divine person and being the *Son*. But the Father and Spirit are equally divine persons, and so their power to assume human nature must equally be affirmed.

The inference that because a divine person has become incarnate any divine person could become incarnate need not rely on a univocal application of “divine person.” The analogous *ratio* of “divine person” avoids the

⁶⁷ Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 21, disp. 33, dub. 3, §1, no. 70: “Liquet gratiam unionis a Deo intentam, et de facto existentem petivisse per se terminationem ad personam Verbi non secundum conceptum communem, aut subsistentiae, vel personalitatis divinae, sed determinate ut talis persona est Filius Dei naturalis” (vol 16, p. 472). Cf. Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 21, disp. 8, dub. 2, §2, no. 42 (vol. 14, p. 31).

⁶⁸ See *ST* III, q. 3, a. 5 (Leonine ed., 11:62–63). For further comparison of Rahner and the Salmanticenses on this point, see Dylan Schrader, *A Thomistic Christocentrism: Recovering the Carmelites of Salamanca on the Logic of the Incarnation*, Thomistic Ressourcement 17 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 180–89.

fallacy of equivocation. Father, Son, and Spirit are equal in the relevant respect, namely, being one who subsists in the divine nature. Thus, it is valid to infer that any of them is capable of being the terminus of a relation of hypostatic union. At the same time, the common *ratio* of "divine person" always implicitly includes the distinction of persons.

Conclusion

As the Salmanticenses show, the divine simplicity ultimately rules out the univocal application of "divine person" to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But the true commonality of "divine person" (a dogma of faith) rules out pure equivocation. It remains that "divine person" applies to the three persons in respect of one another analogically. There is something common to them, allowing for a common name and *ratio*: each is a relation subsisting in the divine nature. But there is also irreducible distinction: each is *this* relation. There is nothing generic about God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not just three instances of the same thing. Each is equal to the others in divinity but radically unique in personal identity. N.V