

# Analogy of being according to aquinas

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Module Analogy of Being According to Aquinas In order to understand Aquinas's doctrine on analogy of beings, it is crucial for one to first gain meaning of the terms that he uses to explain the doctrine. Firstly, Aquinas enlightens an individual on the existence of a relationship between man and God, which he terms as analogical. He continues by stating that the relationship is not univocal or equivocal. By negating the term univocal, Aquinas means that the relation between man and God is not absolutely similar because there is a clear distinction between human beings and divine beings. Aquinas also says that the relationship is not equivocal, as this would mean that man is completely different from God. This would be in contradiction with the fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God, even though they are not equally similar. Thomas offers the solution by introducing analogy, where he states that human beings are analogical to the divine being. This means that, the two beings are similar in kind but possess a great difference in their existence. Therefore, human beings are analogical to God in that they are made in his image but do not possess the infinite characteristics that God has. When describing the term being, Aquinas agrees that it refers to all existence when ambiguously defined. It is an analogical term but only involves one concept, which is existence. When predicated univocally, the term being refers to a specific life form, for example a dog. When predicated equivocally, the term being refers to a genus, for example an animal like a dog or a donkey. In analogical contexts, the term being refer to all life forms even going as far as things, which are not in accordance with nature. The word being can be employed in several concepts. As previously noted, when the word being is predicated univocally, it describes a sole concept that is exactly alike, for example a horse. It can <https://assignbuster.com/analogy-of-being-according-to-aquinas/>

also be predicated equivocally to show concepts that are diverse in meaning. It can be predicated analogically to show concepts that have diverse relations but can be used to refer to one term, for example, God is my rock. The word God does not literally mean a rock but in this concept, a comparison is being made to men that He is strong. These are three diverse concepts that have been brought together to give one basic meaning. There are three ways that are used to predicate a term analogically. The first one involves the concept in participation; the second does not involve the concept but deals with the act of existing and the third involves the act of existing and the concept. Firstly, analogical predication is demonstrated where a concept is classified through prior and posterior but only recognized in one overall attribute. Take the concept of health where an animal is described, its urine checked and the diet looked into. The release of urine depicts a sign of health, a proper diet shows health but health can only exist in the animal. Secondly, analogical predication comes about when several things are positioned in equal footing but one concept exists diversely among them. Take the example of animals, where dogs and donkeys are classified as animals but are diverse in that, they possess different abilities and morphological features. The third analogical predication occurs where no equality exists and the common concepts are entirely diverse and possess no common meaning. Such concepts are stated as equivocal by accident. When describing healthy things, medicine is considered healthy as it brings health, urine because it's a pre-indication of health and diet as it maintains health. These are things that are diverse and not closely related but they all describe one concept. Aquinas states that there is no single thing that can be predicated univocally between man and God because they are equal beings.

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He reasons that man and God cannot be univocal as univocal are identical, even though one can occur prior or posterior to the other. Animals cannot be as intelligent as man or God even when they attempt to imitate. Aquinas makes a distinction between animals, man and God and states that God is the ultimate being. God's existence is what it is as He chooses His own existence while man only exists because God wishes. Aquinas inquires the manner in which we are supposed to understand the God's names. He reasons that individuals could not be capable of making well-articulated claims about God if were exclusively equivocal. Creatures cannot be exclusively univocal also because God's relationship to his things is different from ours and His existence is also distinct. Therefore, we must use analogical words when describing God, which are related but possess different meanings. In short, when individuals use words like ' wise' and ' good' to refer to God, they should predicate them in a prior and posterior sense. Aquinas concludes by stating that the names of the divine being should not function univocally like common analogical expressions, for example healthy. Distinction should be made between what individuals mean as most words have a meaning of time and properties rather than what pertain to God. When talking about God, individuals need to acknowledge the difference and show the difference in meaning where God pertains. When one says God is good, the word good does not suggest properties but means desirable aspects. God is goodness in itself and cannot be compared to man's goodness.