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A Proposed Solution of St. Thomas Aquinas's "Third Way" Through *Pros Hen* Analogy

Abstract: St. Thomas's Third Way to prove the existence of God, "Of Possibility and Necessity" (*ST* 1, q.2, art. 3, response) is one of the most controverted passages in the entire Thomistic corpus. The central point of dispute is that if there were only possible beings, each at some time would cease to exist and, therefore, at some point in time nothing would exist, and because something cannot come from nothing, in such an eventuality, nothing would exist now—a *reductio ad absurdum* conclusion. Therefore, at least one necessary being must exist. Generations of critics and defenders have contended over St. Thomas's proof. This article argues that the principle of *pros hen* analogy is implicit in the Third Way and that once identified explains the ontological dependency of possible beings, as secondary analogates, on the first necessary being, as primary analogate. Thus, without the necessary being as primary analogate, possible beings simply could not exist. The fact that they do exist is evidence for the existence of the necessary being. St. Thomas makes synthesizes the principle of *pros hen* analogy, as found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, with the Neoplatonic principle of participation. Aristotle develops *pros hen* analogy in contradistinction to univocal and equivocal predication as well as to genus in *Metaphysics* 4.2, 11.3, 12.3-5. Since Scotus and re-enforced by modern analytic logic, philosophers have almost universally regarded any kind of analogical predication as a sub-category of equivocal predication and, thus, implicitly occlude the possibility of considering *pros hen* analogy in their readings of the Third Way. Distinction of *per se* and *per accidens* infinite regress and of radical and natural contingency are also central to understanding the Third Way. While resolving apparent problems in the Third Way, the article also seeks to rehabilitate the doctrine of *pros hen* analogy as a basic principle in Thomistic and, indeed, Aristotelian metaphysics.

Keywords: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Third Way, *pros hen* analogy, possibility, necessity, contingency, infinite regress.

The literature[1] is so extensive on St. Thomas Aquinas's Third Way to prove the existence of God, "Of Possibility and Necessity,"[2] that any further comment must justify the conceit of supposing that something new might be said. Critics accuse St. Thomas of logical fallacies and of ignoring obvious objections.[3] Defenders explain, sometimes tortuous-

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1   An earlier version of this article was presented to The Metaphysical Society of America at its annual meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 2017.

2   St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q.2, a. 3, resp. Leonine edition. Rome. 1882-. Vol. 13.

3   John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 463, 465-67. Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways:*

ly, how and why the Third Way makes sense. The central point of dispute is that if there were only possible beings, each at some time would cease to exist and, therefore, at some point in time nothing would exist, and because something cannot come from nothing, in such an eventuality, nothing would exist now—a *reductio ad absurdum* conclusion. Therefore, at least one necessary being must exist. Generations of scholars have contended over St. Thomas's argument. I propose to reframe the discussion by introducing the principle of *pros hen* analogy which—as far as I can discover—has not previously been suggested as a basis for resolving the problems of the Third Way. *En route* to making the case for that claim, I shall also argue that the doctrine of *pros hen* analogy is an indispensable principle in Thomistic and, indeed, Aristotelian metaphysics. No small part of this article's burden is to argue for the legitimacy of analogy as a third kind of predication situated between univocal and equivocal predication and, further, for the legitimacy of *pros hen* analogy, a species of analogical predication, held by Aristotle as well as by Aquinas.

It is all well and good to maintain that the argument of the Third Way works just fine as many scholars have, but how it works has not been obvious to other scholars[4] even one as sympathetic, indeed reverential, towards St. Thomas as Monsignor John F. Wippel may well be identified.[5] A difference between the Third Way and the other four is that it is obvious how those others work. Scholars may argue over whether those arguments are successful, but the argument itself in each is clear enough. It is reasonable to suppose that St. Thomas thought the Third Way to be as obvious in the form of argument as the other four and that he would have been aware of evident problems. On the basis of the text alone, the Third Way is seriously flawed. That conclusion, however, is itself a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*: flaws evident to first-year graduate students eluded one of the greatest minds in the history of philosophy. When St. Thomas dictated the Third Way, he was just having a bad day. I am always nervous when I think I have detected a mistake which some genius has not. What are we missing when we read the Third Way? In other words, it is not merely a question of whether some scholar today is insightful and knowledgeable enough to figure out what St. Thomas really meant, rather

St. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs of God's Existence (New York: Shocken Books, 1969), 54-66. Father Owens argues that the claim of logical fallacy simply does not hold. Joseph Owens, "*Quandoque* and *Aliquando* in Aquinas' *Tertia Via*," *New Scholasticism* 54 (1980), 463-64, 463 n. 26, 470 n.33, and 472-73 n. 38.

4 Professor Knasas quotes scholars on the difficulty of satisfactorily explaining the Third Way and himself takes up the challenge of metaphysical refurbishment. John F. X. Knasas, "Making Sense of the *Tertia Via*," *New Scholasticism*, 54, no. 4 (1980), 476. While his argumentation may be accurate, it does not render the Third Way obvious in the fashion of the other four Ways. Already in 1954, Father Connolly observed, "For quite some time the debate has raged in the school concerning the basis and nature of the demonstration which St. Thomas says is taken from the notion of possibility." Thomas Kevin Connolly, "The Basis of the Third Proof for the Existence of God," *The Thomist*, 17, no. 3 (July 1954), 281. He also notes that the problem is a modern one derived from the reading of John of St. Thomas (d. 1644) who recasts the Third Way in terms of metaphysical contingency. Ibid., 284-85.

5 Father Brian Davies makes this point. Brian Davies, "Aquinas's Third Way," *New Blackfriars*, 82, no. 968 (October 2001), 463, n. 1.

whether we can discern as obvious what was obvious to St. Thomas.[6] Otherwise, we are left with the absurdity proposed above.

While the direction of my own interpretation of the Third Way proceeds differently than that of Father Joseph Owens—a different direction, but not discordant with his conclusions—I aim to implement some of the same exegetical principles. Father Owens says of his own methodology, "The meaning they [the arguments of the Third Way] take on when thought out against the background of Aquinas' own metaphysical tenets may be gauged."[7] To develop that point, what St. Thomas says in the text of a given passage must be read in the context of the metaphysical principles he held in general. Further, Father Owens opines, "*All* his 'ways' of proving God's existence appear rather as parallel developments of the one basic demonstration... . Accordingly they should be used to elucidate one another. Just as Aristotle is to be interpreted *ex Aristotle*, so Aquinas, correspondingly, from his own work."[8] A basic principle of exegesis is that a text is its own best interpreter, and the second best is the corpus of which the text is a part. There are exceptions, but the rule has firmly stood the test of time. That is exactly what I propose to do by invoking the metaphysics of *pros hen* analogy in which possible beings are understood as secondary analogates contingent upon the first uncaused necessary being as the primary analogate. This is a principle which Aquinas knows and employs in other texts and, significantly, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's "Metaphysics"* which is contemporary with the *Summa Theologiae*.[9] I suggest that this explanation is not generally obvious today because *pros hen* analogy is largely relegated to the status of a species of equivocation, rather than a third kind of predication which bespeaks the structure of reality.[10] I shall argue, first, for the centrality of *pros hen* analogy to the Third Way, and, second, that *pros hen* analogy, for St. Thomas following Ar-

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6 Father Dewan makes a similar point in trying to resolve the problems associated with understanding the Third Way, "One of the difficulties in reading *TW* [the Third Way] is, on the one hand, to include in one's understanding of those conceptions which it makes sense to presuppose." Lawrence Dewan, "The Distinctiveness of the Third Way," *Dialogue* 19 (1980), 207. Similarly, Father Owens sets the parameters for further investigation, "On the philosophic plan the thrust should be strictly to *understand* the argument as it was developed in the thought of Aquinas. For this purpose the terms used in the *via* have to be taken in the meanings current for them at that time." Owens, "*Quandoque*," 449.

7 Owens, "*Quandoque*," 450.

8 Ibid., 450, n. 3.

9 Eleonore Stump and Brian Davies, *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 553ff. Oxford Handbooks Online: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195326093.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195326093-miscMatter-46 .

10 This is adjacent to a point made by Father Dewan in his article in which he uses St. Thomas's Third Way to explain why the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" is a meaningful question: Discovering its meaning "requires strict adherence to the viewpoint of the ontological primacy of substance, a viewpoint to which few are habitually inclined." Lawrence Dewan, "'Something Rather Than Nothing' and St. Thomas' Third Way," *Science et Esprit*, 38/1 (1987), 71. In other words, an obvious explanation can often prove elusive to those who do not practice the necessary habits of thought. As a further note on the history of philosophy, Father Dewan, in effect, argues that only a Thomist—using the Third Way—can answer the question of "something rather than nothing." To put it the other way round, his article implicitly uses that question to show how the Third Way is valid.

istotle, does in fact bespeak the structure of reality. Before proposing a solution, however, it is essential to set forth the problem.

The Third Way and Its Problems

Here are the steps of the Third Way:

1. In nature, there are possible beings, subject to generation and corruption.
2. Possible beings cannot always be because what can not-be at some point in time (quandoque) will not-be.
3. If there were only possible beings, then at some point in time (aliquando) nothing would be.11
4. If that were the case, then even now (etiam nunc) nothing would be because what-is-not begins to be through something which-is.
5. If, therefore, there had been no being, it would have been impossible for anything to begin to be, and thus there would be nothing now—a reductio ad absurdum conclusion.
6. Therefore, not all beings can be possible; there must be necessary beings.
7. Everything necessary either has its cause from another necessary being or it does not.
8. There cannot be an infinite regress in necessary beings as has already been established regarding efficient causes (i.e., the Second Way).
9. Therefore, it is necessary to postulate something which exists by per se necessity, having no cause from any other necessary being, rather is the cause of other necessary beings.
10. Which all call "God."

I have followed Monsignor Wippel in emphasizing the temporal aspect to this argument.[12] St. Thomas begins the Third Way empirically, as he does in the other four ways. As a matter of human experience, there are beings which come into existence and go out of existence. The argument seems to run that if there were only such beings which can go out of existence, then at some point in time they would all go out of existence, in which case nothing would exist now, but things do exist now, so there must be something other than beings which come into and go out of existence. But, we are quick to respond, maybe it has simply not happened yet. It might be that in precisely five seconds from now, the remaining possible beings will go out of existence. But, no, not yet, you are reading this sentence. But it still might happen in a few billion years, a good run by all accounts, but like the best Broad-

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11 Although in this paper, I make use of Aristotle's writings, as one considers the genealogy of the argument itself, it is interesting to note that Socrates says something very like this in his case for the immortality of the soul: "If everything that partakes of life were to die and remain in that state and not come to life again, would not everything ultimately have to be dead and nothing alive? Even if the living came from some other source, and all that lived died, how could all things avoid being absorbed in death?" Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. intro. and notes by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1997), 63; *Phaedo* 72c-d. Father Dewan affirms Father Renatus Arnou's inclusion of the *Phaedo* 72c-e "in his collection of passages ancestral" to the Third Way. Dewan, "Distinctiveness," 208. Renatus Arnou, *De quinque viis sancti Thomae* (Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1949), 17.

12 Ibid., 464. Monsignor Wippel surveys the attempts to remedy the difficulty raised by this temporal aspect. Ibid., 464, n. 57. Monsignor Wippel and Father Owens agree—something that does not always happen—on the intransigence of the temporal aspect of this argument. Owens, "*Quandoque,*" 447.

way shows, the realm of possible beings must come to an end. Or perhaps—and Monsignor Wippel describes this possibility, albeit more soberly than I shall do—there is a kind of cosmic relay race of possible beings.[13] One possible being does not go out of existence until another comes into existence, and then another, and then another, and, thereby, the universe is always well-stocked with possible beings. There is actual considerable empirical evidence for this view. If what St. Thomas meant was no more than that, then he was just having an off-moment, and we should scrap the Third Way. As I suggested above, that is its own kind of *reductio ad absurdum* argument.

Before beginning to propose my solution to the problem of the Third Way, it will be useful to examine *Summa contra gentiles*, 1.15, 5 which one might regard as a kind of first draft of the argument which will become the Third Way.[14] The *Summa contra gentiles* was written c. 1259-1265 and the *Summa Theologiae* c. 1266-1273.[15] Understanding some of the differences between the two may help to illuminate the Third Way.

1. As in the Third Way, St. Thomas begins empirically. "We find in the world," he observes, beings "subject to generation and corruption which can be and not-be."
2. "What can be has a cause because, since it is equally related to two contraries, being and non-being, it must be owing to some cause that being accrues to it."
3. There is no infinite regress of causes.
4. Therefore, there must be some necessary being.
5. "Every necessary being ... either has its necessity in an outside source or ... is necessary through itself."
6. There is no infinite regress of necessary beings.
7. Therefore, there must be "a first necessary being, which is necessary through itself."
8. "This is God ... . the first cause."
9. "God, therefore, is eternal, since whatever is necessary through itself is eternal."[16]

Overall, the argument from *SCG* 1, 15, 5 is straightforwardly causal. The necessity of a first necessary being is to avoid infinite regress, the kind of move St. Thomas makes in the First and Second Ways. The argument against infinite regress is entirely missing from the first half of the Third Way, presumably because St. Thomas has already used that argument in the Second Way, as he explicitly says in point six of the Third Way. That there is no infinite regress is invoked only in the second half of the Third Way about the causation of necessary beings. The temporal aspect of the Third Way is completely absent from the argument in *Summa contra gentiles* where St. Thomas affirms that there is no infinite regress with re-

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13 "Why not suggest rather that one possible being has come into being after another, and that after another, extending backwards into a beginningless past? Under this supposition, some possible being or beings will have existed at any given point of time, although no single possible being will have existed from eternity." Ibid., 465.
14 In the literature, there is a standard set of texts one or more of which is examined in order to try to find a reasonable explanation for what St. Thomas meant: *Summa contra gentiles* 1.15, 5, *De potentia* (various passages) , *De ente* 4-5, *The Commentary on" De caelo*" 1.12, and *Compendium theologiae* 6.
15 Stump and Davies, *Handbook of Aquinas*, 553ff.
16 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles, Book One: God*, trans. with an intro. and notes by Anton C. Pegis (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 98-99.

spect to possible and necessary beings. Also absent in *SCG*—and in which the temporal terms are embedded—is the entire argument about the inevitable void if there were only possible beings. This suggests that St. Thomas deemed addition of the segment of argumentation, i.e., steps 2-5, in the Third Way as significant to the argument. While the temporal aspect of the Third Way is absent in *SCG* I, 15, 5, there is a word applied to God in *SCG* I, 5, 5 which he does not use in the Third Way, namely "eternal" which St. Thomas uses twice in the last sentence of *SCG* I, 15, 5. One additional consideration is relevant, namely that in the second point of *SCG* I, 15, 5, St. Thomas argues that the reason a possible being must have a cause is that every possible being "is equally related to two contraries, being and non-being." The equal relation between contraries is part of Aristotle's argument for *pros hen* analogy as shall be seen below. My hunch is that either *pros hen* analogy contributed to the way St. Thomas thought about the proof already in *SCG* or that the connection occurred to him while subsequently reflecting on this equal relation, and thereby St. Thomas realized the more elaborate argument in the first half of the Third Way. Thus, the ways in which the two proofs are like and unlike may also serve as clues in resolving scholarly puzzlement over the Third Way.[17]

It is necessary now to turn to Aristotle's development of *pros hen* analogy and to examine St. Thomas's comments on Aristotle's discussion as well as to see how St. Thomas himself uses *pros hen* analogy in other texts.

Aristotle and St. Thomas on *Pros hen* Analogy

For St. Thomas Aquinas—and on his account following Aristotle—there are three kinds of predication: univocal, equivocal, and analogical, which is clear from St. Thomas's *Commentary on Aristotle's "Metaphysics"* as shall be seen below. Univocal predication is the use of the same word with the same meaning; equivocal, the same word with different meanings; analogical, the same word with partly the same meaning and partly a different meaning. The re-categorization of analogical predication seems to have begun with John Duns Scotus who held that a science is only possible if a reality can be spoken of univocally. Therefore, according to Scotus, analogical predication is not a third kind of predication at all, rather only a form of equivocal predication.[18] The triumphal march of analytic logic in modern philosophy has made the demotion and even banishment of *pros hen* analogy more or less complete. As an example of the occlusion of analogy from philosophical discussion, in the "Introduction" of *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, Professor Jonathan Barnes as editor acknowledges that there are "Thomist ... and 'continental' interpretations of Aristotle" to which his "*Companion* ... does not address itself." Professor Barnes is explicit, "The term 'philosophy,'

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17 On this point, I depart from the view of Monsignor Wippel who finds no clue in the dissimilarity of arguments in *SCG* and the Third Way. I stand much closer to the view of Father Owens: "The *tertia via* elucidates the *Contra Gentiles* version by making explicit the temporal facet contained in the notion of the possible... . In essence it coincides with the argument in the *Contra Gentiles*." Owens, "*Quandoque*," 466. See also 474.

18 "Il n'y a pas, en effet, d'intermédiaire entre l'univocité et l'équivocité, et toute tentative d'introduire un troisième terme qui serait l'analogie ne résiste pas à l'examen." Bernard Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après Saint Thomas D'Aquin* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1963), 151 and 119-26.

so far as the *Companion* is concerned, refers to what is sometimes called the analytical tradition of philosophy."[19] The paronymy of Aristotle's *Categories* "*with reference* [his emphasis] to some one item," Professor Barnes calls "a focal meaning" which he applies not only to the paronyms of the *Categories*, but also to what I—following Aquinas—would call the primary analogate of a *pros hen* analogy, "health" of the *Metaphysics*, for example.[20] Thus, in Professor Barnes' account, there is no ontological dependence of the diverse entities upon the one thing; they merely refer to the one thing. The diverse entities do not relate to the one with respect to being; they merely refer to the one with respect to meaning. Professor Barnes reads Aristotle's text through a nominalist lens. Of course, he might well riposte that I read Aristotle's text through a Thomistic (i.e., realist) lens. *Concedo*. I remark, however, that St. Thomas was a careful enough reader of Aristotle's texts to distinguish not only his own view from Aristotle's, but also Aristotle's view from the interpretations offered by, for example, Avicenna and Averroes. My point here is that for most analytic philosophy, analogy—denoting an ontological relationship—simply does not come into consideration.

Before leaving Professor Barnes' analysis, however, it is interesting to compare his position with that of Father Owens on analogical predication and on the relation of the paronyms of the *Categories* to *pros hen* analogy of the *Metaphysics*. Professor Barnes and Father Owens agree that there are only two kinds of predication, univocal and equivocal. Father Owens says what I call "*pros hen* analogies," are "equivocals" that "are expressed in reference to one form."[21] This not so different from Professor Barnes' "focal meaning." They disagree, however, on the relationship of the paronyms and *pros hen* analogy. According to Father Owens, paronyms do not stand *between* univocals and equivocals, rather they "cut across the first two classes [i.e., equivocals and univocals]; they are differentiated entirely on grammatical distinctions."[22] My own position is that analogy is a legitimate and for metaphysics essential form of predication. With Professor Barnes against Father Owens, I read the paronymy of the *Categories* as—at very least—the ultimate antecedent in Aristotle's thought of what becomes fully developed as *pros hen* analogy in the *Metaphysics*.

The three kinds of predication are first principles of Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotle begins the *Categories* by distinguishing the homonymous, the synonymous, and the paronymous. The homonymous, commonly called "equivocal," applies to two or more beings with the same name, but in each case there is a different definition. The synonymous, commonly called "univocal," applies to beings with the same name and which have the same definition in each case. The paronymous, commonly called "analogical," applies to beings

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19 Jonathan Barnes, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), x.

20 Jonathan Barnes, "Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999 75-77.

21 Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian "Metaphysics": A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* with a preface by Etienne Gilson, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), 121.

22 Ibid., 111.

with the same name, but with a difference.[23] Aristotle expands the notion of the paronymous in his *Metaphysics*. There are three principle passages in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle elaborates *pros hen* analogy. Although he says much the same thing about *pros hen* analogy itself in each passage, he distinguishes it in three different ways. In 4.2, he explains how *pros hen* analogy differs from equivocal predication. In 11.3, he elaborates what he states in 4.2 and, further, explains how *pros hen* analogy differs from the genus-species relationship. In 12.3-5, he explains how *pros hen* analogy is like univocal predication, but not identical to it.

Aristotle, son of a physician, is fond of noting that one may predicate "medical" or "health" of things in many different ways (e.g., 4.2). In 11.3, very much in parallel to 4.1-2, he affirms that the philosopher—in distinction to the mathematician, natural scientist, dialectician, or sophist—uses the term "being" in a way which is neither univocal, nor equivocal:

> Since the science of the philosopher treats being *qua* being universally and not of some part of it, and "being" has many senses and is not used in one only, it follows that if it is used homonymously and in virtue of no common nature, it does not fall under one science (for there is no one class in the case of such things); but if it is used in virtue of some common nature, it will fall under one science. The term [i.e., being] seems to be used in the way we have mentioned, like "medical" and "healthy." For each of these also we use in many senses; and each is used in this way because the former refers somehow to medical science and the latter to health.[24]

Aristotle is resolving the problem of how metaphysics—for him "philosophy" in the unqualified sense—can be a science since we use the term "being" in many different ways: substances, accidents, principles, conceptual beings, even non-being. If there were no common term, science could not be possible. Aristotle argues that though the use of being is not univocal, it is also not equivocal because there is a commonality to the various uses of "being," but it is not a univocal commonality, rather a *pros hen* analogical commonality, in the way that drinking orange juice and urine can both be healthy (my example), but healthy in ways it is best not to confuse.[25] He concludes at the end of 11.3:

> Therefore it remains that the *philosopher* [rather than the mathematician, natural scientist, dialectician, or sophist] studies the things we have named, in so far as they are being. Since all that is is said to be in virtue of one common character though the term has many meanings, and contraries are in the same case ... and things of this sort can fall under one science, the difficulty we stated at the beginning is solved,—I mean the question how
> there can be one science of things which are many and different in genus.[26]

Explicit here is that "being" is not a genus, because different species relate to genus in the same way. The special character of *pros hen* analogical predication is that the term in question, in this case "being," has many things relate to it in ways partly the same and partly

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23 Aristotle *Categories* 1a1-15.
24 Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, 2 vols., ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2.1676; *Metaphysics* 11.3.1060b31-1061a2. Hereafter, Barnes 2.1676. *Metaphysics* 11.3.1060b31-1061a2.
25 *Metaph.*, 11.31061a2-1061b10, Barnes, 2.1676-77.
26 *Metaph.*, 11.3.1061b10-16; Barnes, 2.1677.

different. Thus analogy stands between univocity and equivocity. Analogy is fundamental to Aristotle's resolution of the problem of the one and the many. *Pros hen* analogy has the character of unity which it shares with univocity and of difference which it shares with equivocity. To develop Aristotle's point a little further, the relationship described in *pros hen* analogy is that of secondary analogates to the primary analogate in which the secondary analogates are contingent upon the primary analogate. Thus, table, greenness, "act-potency," unicorn, and non-being each in some sense "is." That "is-ness" is the way in which each thing relates to and is contingent upon the primary analogate, "Being." To take away the primary analogate is to take away secondary analogates contingent upon it. Aristotle explicitly discusses the problem of contraries, in specific being and non-being; this relates to point two in *SCG* 1, 15, 5. If the primary analogate of Being is eliminated, then all secondary analogates are eliminated even the secondary analogate of non-being. Let this be clear through emphasis: non-being cannot exist—even as a conceptual category—except as it is contingent upon being.[27]

In *Metaphysics* 12, Aristotle accounts for the cause of all motion and kinds of motion culminating in the First Unmoved Mover.[28] In 12.3, he lists three kinds of causes of motion: art, nature, and chance.[29] These three kinds of causes, however, can account for this motion or that motion, but not for motion itself. He considers various possibilities including Platonic Forms which he rejects yet again, but he also sees that the kind of *pros hen* analogy which he has employed before, e.g., health, does not provide an adequate explanation, because to the degree that health causes urine and drinking orange juice alike to be healthy, health is simultaneous with the urine and with the drinking of orange juice.[30] He concludes at the beginning of 12.4: "The causes and the principles of different things are in a sense different, but in a sense, if one speaks universally [*katholou*] and analogically [*kat' analogian*, i.e., proportionately analogical][31] they are the same for all" (1070a31-32).[32] Aristotle discusses a range of different kinds of causes of motion which are diverse and yet which relate to some first, and he concludes 12.4, "Besides these there is that which as first of all things moves all things" (1070b28-35).[33] In other words, the First Unmoved Mover is the primary analogate upon which all things moveable are ontologically depen-

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27 Though this is not the occasion to argue the point, it is clear to me that for Aristotle *pros hen* analogy describes the foundational nature of all that is and that the first and unmoved mover is the primary analogate of absolutely everything else directly or indirectly.

28 Aristotle *Metaph.* 12.7.

29 Aristotle *Metaph.* 12.3 (1070a4-6).

30 My examples, but in principle Aristotle *Metaph.* 12.3 (1070a9-30).

31 An important question is how Aristotle regards the relationship "*kat' analogian*," to which he refers here, and those things which are *parōnuma*, to which he refers in *Categories* 1. That, however, is a question beyond the scope of this article. I also acknowledge that my argument here begs the question of the relationship of the paronymy of the *Categories* 1 and the proportionate analogy of *Metaphysics* 12.3-5. I recognize that my conclusion in what follows here requires much more argument and evidence; I state it here as a summary of my interpretation of the referenced passages.

32 Barnes, 2.1691.

33 Barnes, 2.1691.

dent secondary analogates and is, therefore, the first which causes movement in diverse entities. In his *Commentary*, Aquinas observes that this is the first of three proofs for the necessary existence of the First Unmoved Mover by Aristotle (the second is actuality and potentiality 1070b35-1071a16, and the third is substance and accidents 1071a17-1071b2). In each case, the First Unmoved Mover is the principle and cause in ontological relation to which all moveable entities move insofar as they do move (and, therefore, exist).[34] Aristotle's argument here is diffuse, as it often is when he is thinking through new material. The reader must do his or her share of work, gathering the points made with a view of the conclusion to which Aristotle is headed which, in this case is 12.7 and his exposition of the First Unmoved Mover. When one notes that in developing what I denominate "*pros hen* analogy," Aristotle does so in three different passages, as noted above. Again, in *Metaphysics* 4.2 (1003a33-1003b1), he distinguishes *pros hen* analogy from equivocal predication (*homōnuma*). In 11.3 (1060b31-36) he elaborates his distinction in 4.2 in relation to equivocal predication and adds the distinction in relation to genus. In 12.3-5 (1070a5),[35] he distinguishes *pros hen* analogy in relation to univocal predication (*sunōnuma*) and how *pros hen* analogy is like univocal predication but not identical to it. St. Thomas reads the material as a comparison of analogical predication with univocal which he indicates in the conclusion to his commentary on 12.5: "Hence we cannot say that they [i.e., principles] are the same without qualification," that would be univocal predication, "but only analogously."[36] Thus, analogical predication can serve as a language of science because there is a common and ontologically prior primary analogate, but it also encompasses the diversity of the world because the secondary analogates relate to the same primary analogate. Aristotle preserves the ability to know the world scientifically, and at the same time because things in the world relate to that same primary analogate in different ways, Aristotle preserves the real diversity of the world. Reading *Metaphysics* 12.3-5 this way, one sees that *pros hen* analogical predication is central to Aristotle's resolution of the problem of the one and the many. St. Thomas's work on the *Metaphysics* commentary was roughly contemporaneous with his writing of the *Summa Theologiae* which is also to say after completion of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.[37] Perhaps working through Aristotle's argument in *Metaphysics* 12 led Aquinas to re-think his argument for the existence of God in *SCG* 1, 15, 5. In any event, it is clear that Aristotle's God was the primary analogate, the one absolutely necessary and ontologically prior being that caused motion, whether proximately or remotely, in all other entities as secondary analogates. Aquinas's doctrine of God differs from Aristotle's in many ways, but it is clear he found the causal nature of the *pros hen* analogical relationship in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

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[34] St. Thomas Aquinas. *Commentary on the "Metaphysics" of Aristotle*, trans. John P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961), 872-75; XII.L4:C2474-2487.

[35] With respect to Aristotle's account of *pros hen* analogy in 12.3-5, I am endebted to Mr. Joseph Foster for calling my attention to this line of argument in the paper he wrote for my course, PHIL 305 "Metaphysics (for non-majors)," Winter-Spring Semester, March 15, 2017.

[36] Aquinas, *Commentary*, 875; XII.L4:C2486.

[37] Stump and Davies, *Handbook of Aquinas*, 553ff.

St. Thomas presents a clear statement of the doctrine of analogical predication, and specifically *pros hen* analogical predication, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's "Metaphysics."* He states:

> It is evident that terms which are used in this way are midway between univocal and equivocal terms. In the case of univocity one term is predicated of different things with absolutely one and the same meaning; for example, the term *animal*, which is predicated of a horse and of an ox, signifies a living, sensory substance. In the case of equivocity the same term is predicated of various things with an entirely different meaning. This is clear in the case of the term *dog*, inasmuch as it is predicated of a constellation and of a certain species of animal. But in the case of those things which are spoken of in the way mentioned previously, the same term is predicated of various things with a meaning that is partly the same and partly different—different regarding the different modes of relation, and the same regarding that to which it is related; for to be a sign of something and to be a cause of something are different, but health is one. Terms of this kind, then, are predicated analogously, because they have a proportion to one thing.**38**

While this is a commentary, and thus it can always be argued that St. Thomas is merely explicating Aristotle's view, it is also clear that this view of Aristotle's is also his own.**39** It is also clear that Aristotle, followed by St. Thomas, understood *pros hen* analogy as a general principle and in no way exclusive to being. After all, Aristotle, and again followed by St. Thomas, begins his discussion of *pros hen* analogy with the subject of health or medical. He also discusses it in relation to justice.**40** Indeed, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5, for example, is illuminated by understanding Aristotle's discussion of the various states of justice and injustice as secondary analogates to the primary analogate of justice itself. This applies equally to his account of other moral virtues as well, for example of courage, non-courage, and semi-courage in *Nicomachean Ethics* 3. For Aristotle followed by St. Thomas, *pros hen* analogy is a foundational structure of reality. I shall argue that this structure is implicit to the Third Way. Without recognition of the underlying importance of *pros hen* analogy, the Third Way appears "ambiguous" or even "enigmatic,"**41** precisely as has been the case for the past four hundred years.

St. Thomas on Possibility and Necessity

Before arguing my case, I want to adopt in part arguments advanced by Father Brian Davies for the soundness of the Third Way. To begin, Father Davies makes some nice distinctions about possibility and necessity. The necessary is what cannot not-be, or what cannot be other than it is. The possible is what can not-be, or what can be other than it is. Possible beings are those subject to generation and corruption, i.e., they were generated by other possible beings and they will perish. Such beings are material and moveable. An oak tree

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38 Aquinas, *Commentary*, 778; XI.L3:C2197.

39 Monsignor Wippel develops St. Thomas's teaching from *De principiis naturae*, c. 6, but also correlates that material with *De veritate* q. 2, a. 11, *De potentia* q. 7, a. 7, *Summa contra gentiles* I, c. 34, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 13, a. 5 as well the *Commentary of Aristotle's Metaphysics* 4.2. Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 74-83.

40 *Metaph.* 11.3.1061a19-27.

41 Father van Steenberghen calls the phrase, "quandoque non est," "ambigu," and the phrase "aliquando nihil fuit in rebus," "tout à fait énigmatique." Fernand van Steenberghen, *Le Problème de l'existence de Dieu dans les écrits de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Editions de l'institut supérieur de philosophie, 1980), 194.

produces acorns which can become oak trees, but every oak tree shall eventually perish. By "generate" and "perish," St. Thomas means substantial change. When an oak tree falls to the ground, no longer a living being, it becomes a log and accessories to a log; the oak tree is no more.[42] To refer to the oak log and accessories as the "oak tree" is an homonymous designation. The log etc. used to be an oak tree, but part of the definition of oak tree is that it is living; when it ceases to live, substantial change occurs, and it ceases to be an oak tree. Such are possible beings. Such beings are naturally contingent upon one another. "This" oak tree is generated from "that" acorn; if that acorn had not existed, then neither would this oak tree. This oak tree is naturally contingent upon that acorn, but that acorn is naturally contingent upon yet another oak tree, which is contingent upon another acorn, etc. Such a line of argument leads to an infinite regress. St. Thomas, following Aristotle, distinguishes between two kinds of infinite regress. The first is *per se* infinite regress which—both say—is impossible. The second kind of infinite regress is *per accidens* which is possible according to both Aristotle and Aquinas.[43] Father Davies discusses St. Thomas's teaching on *per accidens* infinite regress, quoting *ST* 1, q. 46, art. 2, ad 7:

> It is not impossible to proceed to infinity accidentally as regards efficient causes; for instance, if all the causes thus infinitely multiplied should have the order of only one cause, while their multiplication is accidental... . It is likewise accidental to this particular man as generator to be generated by another man.; for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man. For all men generating hold one grade in the order of efficient causes—viz., the grade of a particular generator. Hence it is not impossible for a man to be generated by man to infinity.[44]

Thus, humans generating humans and oak trees generating oak trees can go on to infinity. If there can be a *per accidens* infinite series, why would that not be sufficiently explanatory of the world's existence? That is to say, *per accidens* infinite series works against the text of the Third Way in a way very like Monsignor Wippel's argument of what I have characterized above as an unending relay race in which one possible being, before expiring, hands the baton onto the next possible being. St. Thomas could not mean what the text says at the most literal level, namely that if there were only possible beings then at some point in time nothing would exist and, therefore, nothing would exist now. The counter-factual in his own philosophical system is the *per accidens* infinite series which he acknowledges as possible. It is clear from this analysis that St. Thomas must have *meant* something in the Third Way which he does not *say*. My argument is that what he meant he regarded as self-evident and that he expected it to be self-evident to his readers, and finally, that what he meant is, in

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42 Davies, "Third Way," 457.

43 Though Sir Anthony Kenny gives evidence that he is aware of the distinction between *per accidens* and *per se* infinite regress (Kenny, *Five Ways*, 33), and his arguments seem to relate more to *per accidens* infinite regress. Ibid., 24-33. His argument would clearer had he made explicit which form of infinite regress he means, and, if both, then when the one and when the other.

44 Davies, "Third Way," 458. Repeatedly while reading Father Davies's article, I found myself expecting him to conclude—as I have—that St. Thomas is thinking of *pros hen* analogy and assumes that we are thinking of it too. Father Davies' arguments seem to lead to the conclusion which he does not draw which is why I make use of his arguments so heavily.

fact, no longer self-evident even to sophisticated philosophical readers. To put this another way and to further my reframing of how to understand the Third Way, I suggest that the Third Way can and should be read as St. Thomas's explanation as to why a *per accidens* infinite series of possible beings is not an adequate explanation of the existence of the world. A *per accidens* infinite series can, in fact, be the case, but it does not explain how such an infinite series itself came into existence.

In search for this explanation, it is helpful to examine a distinction made by Father Lawrence Dewan in his discussion of *De potentia* 7.7, namely between "coming-to-be" versus "being." "Coming-to-be" is the natural contingency of those living beings in which the principle of cause is intrinsic. The causality of coming-to-be is univocal, thus "one having the same form as the effect." Oak trees cause oak trees; humans, humans. *ST* I, q. 46, art. 2, ad 7, just quoted as cited by Father Davies, provides support for Father Dewan's observation that this coming-to-be of living things is univocal. St. Thomas refers to "the order of only one cause" and "one grade in the order of efficient causes—viz., the grade of a particular generator." "Coming-to-be" is according to the univocity of cause and effect. The cause of "being," by contrast, requires a cause in which the cause and effect are analogically related. This is true of artifacts in which there is nothing which necessitates their creation. The cause is disproportionate to its effect. That is equally true of beavers and their dams and humans and their skyscrapers. The human, however, having had a hard day at skyscraper building, goes home and then bakes a cake or writes a poem. The diversity demands an explanation of analogical causation, and, in fact, *pros hen* analogical causation, because what the skyscraper, cake, and poem have in common is that they are related to one and the same maker. The classes of natural artifacts (i.e., made by animals by instinct, such as beaver lodges and bird nests) and human artifacts both stand within the category of possibility and the cause of their "being" is still not absolute because neither animals nor humans make from nothing, rather from something. There remains the question of existence itself, i.e., not why there is a skyscraper or cake or poem, but why anything whatsoever exists. Analogical cause-to-effect can explain this fact of being-at-all, what I call "foundational thatness." Father Dewan wants to use this distinction to help resolve the Third Way by way of proportional analogy (i.e., one-to-another).[45] I do not find his account adequately explanatory because, to begin with, the one-to-another relationship of substance-accident explains the categorical causal relationship (i.e., the category of substance as cause of the category of accident), but it does not account for the diversity of accidents in their contingency upon substance in the way that *pros hen* analogy does.[46] I think he is right in arguing that the distinction of these two kinds of causality, "coming-to-be" and "being," helps explain the Third Way. Possible beings can explain each other's existence in the here and now, i.e., temporally, but possible beings—even an infinite series of them—cannot explain each other's foundational thatness.[47]

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45 Dewan, "'Something. Rather Than Nothing,'" 73

46 See again, Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 83.

47 Father Owens makes this point, as it were, from the other side, "If all things are possibles, they are all preceded individually and collectively by the condition of non-existence" (Owens, "*Quandoque*," 462) and

Necessary beings are, by contrast, immaterial and immoveable; they are not generable or corruptible; they cannot perish. Nevertheless, as Father Davies observes, "Even if something is ungenerable or imperishable, it is still something which exists. So how come it exists?"[48] To this question, he notes St. Thomas's two possible replies: either it is in its nature to exist or it is caused by something else.[49] Here we see that generation and corruption are functions of materiality; causation is not. He makes the same distinction as made by Father Dewan but by another approach and with different vocabulary; it is the difference between "coming-to-be" and "being." An immaterial immoveable being can be caused, but it is not subject to generation or corruption. Thus, necessary beings may be caused or uncaused.[50] Immaterial intellects (e.g., angels, archangels etc.) and the human rational soul after death are examples of caused necessary beings.[51] They are necessary in relation to generation and corruption (i.e., not subject to generation or corruption), and thus they cannot not-exist. They are not, however, without potentiality in that they came into existence through the divine will and in that they can go out of existence by the divine will. They are not possible in the course of nature, but they are possible with respect to the divine will.[52] In their radical contingency upon the divine will, we find a hint that St. Thomas is, indeed, thinking about *pros hen* analogy because absent God who wills their existence, they cannot exist in any way whatsoever. All of reality is subject to this radical contingency, but only material beings subject to generation and corruption are also subject to natural contingency. Thus beings subject to natural contingency are possible only. Those necessary beings still subject to radical contingency are necessary in relation to those beings subject to natural contingency, but possible in relation to the first and uncaused necessary being, called God. Thus, the necessity of immaterial intellects and separate souls is a relative necessity, while the necessity of God is an absolute necessity.[53]

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again, "A cause was demanded to bring the things into existence, just as a cause would be required to destroy or annihilate them" (Ibid., 471).

[48] Davies, "Third Way," 461.

[49] Ibid., 461.

[50] Father Davies uses the terms "derived" and "underived." Ibid., 461. Father van Steenberghen traces the Neoplatonic roots of this argument, and distinguishes between the dependence and contingency. When a necessary being emanates from another, it is dependent but not contingent upon the being from which it is an emanation. He regards this stage of the argument as "purement théoretique" because that component of Neoplatonic metaphysics does not have a place in the thought of St. Thomas. Van Steenberghen, *Le Problème*, 128-29 and 202-03. While van Steenberghen's point is historically illuminating, I adopt the view, which seems to be standard in the literature, that St. Thomas is referring, preeminently, to the heavenly hierarchy (angels, archangels, etc.), possibly also to the human soul and celestial bodies.

[51] I am not taking up the issues of heavenly bodies which, according to St. Thomas following Aristotle, are material, but not subject to generation and corruption. Father Davies does briefly discuss them. Davies, "Third Way," 452.

[52] I have advanced an argument implicit in Father Davies's article: "Aquinas certainly believed that every created thing (including what he called 'matter') can be annihilated by God (as simply ceasing to sustain its existence, whereupon it would fall into nothing)." Davies, "Third Way," 457.

[53] On the face of Father Connolly's argument, it would seem that I disagree with his assertion regarding immaterial intellects, "Though their necessity is received, it is yet absolute." Connolly, "Third Proof," 307. On

Another way to put this is that immaterial intellects are analogically necessary, i.e., the term "necessary" has a meaning partly the same and partly different in this context relative to the absolute necessity of God.[54] This difference in the nature of necessity itself becomes clear by applying the distinction of what a thing is in itself and what it is to some other reality, a distinction St. Thomas explicitly invokes at the end of the Third Way. Possible beings are both possible with respect to themselves and to other beings. Immaterial intellects are necessary with respect to possible beings and with respect to themselves,

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closer reading, though my position and his emphasize different aspects of immaterial intellects' necessity, it is, indeed, a matter of emphasis rather than real difference, for my position is in agreement with his when he writes, "For example we may say that even necessary beings have a logical or objective potency to not-exist inasmuch as it is in the power of God to cease sustaining them in existence. But there would be such a contradiction were we to say that a necessary being had a real, subjective potency to suffer non-existence." Ibid., 308.

54 Sir Anthony Kenny misses this point. His 1969 *Five Ways* was a landmark publication as an analytic reading of the Five Ways and, indeed, for the philosophical challenges he raised to the Five Ways. It is valuable at this point to understand why from his analytic stance he was unable to discern the validity of the Five Ways. One such point is that because analogical prediction is not available to him as anything other than a form of equivocation he errs by reading the term "necessary" as univocal when applied to both God and immaterial intellects. Sir Anthony writes: "In his early writings, St. Thomas utilized this notion of necessity, according to which only God is a necessary being, and all creatures are contingent, since only in God does essence entail existence (*De Veritate* 10, 12c). This is not the sense of necessity used in the Third Way… . [He considers] 'necessary beings who have the cause of their necessity outside themselves' a description which could not apply to God" (Kenny, *Five Ways*, 48). One can also see this quotation that Sir Anthony also fails to distinguish the distinction between natural and radical contingency. Sir Anthony cites the work of Father Guy Jalbert that Aquinas had been converted to a different definition of "necessity," such that the word only meant simply "it cannot cease to exist." (Ibid., 48.) Taking on the arguments of Father Jalbert goes beyond the scope of this article. It is sufficient to point out that even on that account, there is a clear difference between the necessity of a being which has always existed (necessity="could not ever have not existed") and the necessity of beings which once did not exist and then came into existence and thereafter could not cease to exist. He does acknowledge the work of Father Adriaan Pattin who distinguishes between physical and metaphysical contingency which corresponds to the distinction I make between natural and radical contingency (Adriann Patin, "La structure de la Tertia Via," *Doctor Communis*, 18 (1965): 253-58). That does not lead Sir Anthony to reconsider his understanding of what St. Thomas means by "necessity" (For example, see Kenny, *Five Ways*, 50-51). He does, however, manage to arrive at the distinction between beings subject to corruption and those not but which can be annihilated, again the distinction I make between natural and radical contingency (Ibid., 49-54). Even when he distinguishes between "caused and uncaused necessary beings," upon which he says "the concluding stage of his [St. Thomas's] argument turns," he still treats "necessity" as a univocal term (Ibid., 68). Though he does not make reference to Father Connolly's article, his view is consonant with that of Father Connolly (Connolly, "Third Proof," 338). Sir Anthony comes closest to understanding the analogical character of "necessity" with respect to immaterial intellects when he distinguishes logical and natural necessity, but still his understanding of "necessity" remains univocal (Kenny, *Five Ways*, 69). It is not merely, he observes, that necessary beings are caused or uncaused, rather that the cause of its necessity is either with respect to itself or to something else ("Omne autem necessarium vel habet causam suae necessitas aliunde, vel non habet."). Because there can be no infinite regress, he concludes that there must be one and only one being whose necessity is "*per se*." It is not only that a necessary being is either caused or uncaused, but whether, in addition, the necessity itself is derived from another being or is *per se*. He does not distinguish, however, between natural and radical contingency. Indeed, he cannot, because such a distinction would require understanding "contingent" analogically, a possibility not available to him because analogy is considered only a form of equivocation. There is a sense in which Sir Anthony's analysis is an exercise in exploring the limits of analytic philosophy. Without the metaphysics of analogy, he simply does not have the requisite tools to explain the meaning of the Third Way.

but possible beings with respect to God. God, however, is necessary with respect to himself and with respect to all other beings. God is absolutely necessary, i.e., necessary in an unqualified way. Immaterial intellects are necessary only in a qualified way; they are contingent upon God, but contingent in a way partly the same and partly different to the way that beings subject to generation and corruption are contingent. This analysis demonstrates again that the relationship of possible and caused necessary beings to God is that of secondary analogates in a *pros hen* analogical relationship to God as primary analogate. The ways in which possible and caused necessary beings are contingent upon God are partly the same and partly different, thus the relationship is analogical rather than univocal or equivocal. The difference between radical and natural contingency is implicit throughout Father Davies' article, but it only occasionally becomes explicit and never, in my view, as much as would be helpful to explain his resolution of the problems of the Third Way.**55** I suggest that this distinction between radical and natural contingency was, indeed, obvious to St. Thomas, and he expected it to be obvious to his readers.

Once the issue of radical contingency comes into view, so must the *pros hen* analogical relationship of caused necessary beings to the one uncaused necessary being, called God. At this point, I return to point two from St. Thomas's *SCG* argument: "What can be has a cause because, since it is equally related to two contraries, being and non-being, it must be owing to some cause that being accrues to it." For example, a cup of coffee is either hot or not-hot, sweet or not sweet, black or not black. Of course, there are multiple possible causes of the various qualities, but none of the qualities is possible without the substance in relation to which the qualities exist. The "cup of coffee" is the primary analogate in relation to which there is hotness or not, sweetness or not, blackness or not. Substance is the primary analogate which causes the accidents which are secondary analogates. Eliminate the primary analogate, and the secondary analogates are eliminated. What are primary analogates to their secondary analogates can themselves be secondary analogates to other primary analogates, and they in turn to still other primary analogates, and because there is no infinite regress, there must be a first.**56** Given that naturally contingent beings are ul-

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55 In fact, I have brought together material from two different parts of his article. Davies, "Third Way, 452 and 459-62. For all his careful arguments, in the end, his conclusion, i.e., that the Third Way works, is not convincing. In order to arrive at a conclusion which satisfies him, he has to ignore or, at least, diminish the significance of the temporal aspect of the Third Way. That is quite something to do, given the marked repetition of signally temporal words. As Monsignor Wippel observes, not with respect to Father Davies's argument, but in general, "One might then doubt that one was still dealing with Thomas's third way, for the temporal references in the first part would now lose their temporal significance." Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 466.

The other problem I have with Father Davies's conclusion is that it depends upon extensive and complex arguments. That the Third Way works is still not obvious. It may be reasonable and consistent, but it is not obvious. My own argument is that the Third Way is intended by St. Thomas to be as obvious as the other four ways. I further contend that if one assumes *pros hen* analogy as an unstated metaphysical premise of the Third Way then the way it works is obvious. By "obvious," I mean something very different from, as an example, "regarded as sound by an analytic philosopher."

56 Monsignor Wippel explains: "Thus Thomas writes that something may be predicated analogically of two things by reason of their relation to some third thing, as when being is predicated of quality and quantity be-

timately contingent upon the same uncaused primary and eternally necessary being, then the same argument holds for them.

St. Thomas's Neoplatonic Addition to Aristotelian *Pros hen* Analogy

While St. Thomas regards Aristotle as "the philosopher," he is not merely an Aristotelian, rather he also fully embraces the Neoplatonism of St. Augustine, Boethius, Proclus, and (Pseudo) Dionysius. As a Neoplatonist, he incorporates the doctrine of participation. Monsignor Wippel explains the relationship of participation to *pros hen* analogy: "Analogy by reference to a first implies a priority and posteriority on the part of the primary analogate and the secondary analogate(s). This also means that a secondary analogate such as an accident may be regarded as sharing in or participating in being from its primary analogate, its substantial subject."[57] The *pros hen* analogical relationship is, therefore, ontological and not merely logical.[58] The primary analogate causes the secondary analogates. Therefore, secondary analogates are ontologically contingent upon the primary analogate. Father Bernard Montagnes, in summarizing work by Father Cornelio Fabro, writes about St. Thomas's philosophy of being, "Participation, causality and analogy are the three aspects under which philosophy grapples with being. The first two concern the reality of being itself. The third refers to the concepts by which being is represented. Thus analogy is presented by the author as the semantic expression of participation."[59] This is a point from which one can view St. Thomas's originality. He takes an Aristotelian principle, *pros hen analogy*—and a principle which Aristotle employs repeatedly—and loads Neoplatonic content into the principle, namely Platonic participation which Aristotle explicitly rejects.[60] For example, according to Aquinas, the nine accidental categories of being *participate* in the primary category, substance. Thus, in a sentence, Aquinas has synthesized Aristotelian and Neoplatonic metaphysics. He may have done so because he saw—if only implicitly—that Aristotle made claims regarding *pros hen* analogy which had no cor-

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cause of their relationships to substance. Here, therefore, we have the analogy of many to one [*pros hen*] once again, but as applied to predicating being of two accidents because of their relationships to substance." Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 83.

57 Ibid., 86.

58 On this point, I follow Monsignor Wippel in agreement with Father Bernard Montagnes. By contrast, Monsignor Wippel distinguishes his own position from that Professor Ralph McInerny. Ibid., 87, n. 79.

59 "Participation, causalité et analogie sont les trois aspects sous lesquels la philosophie aborde l'être, les deux premiers concernant la réalité même de l'être ; le troisième se rapportant aux concepts par lesquels l'être est représenté. Ainsi l'analogie est-elle présentée par l'auteur comme la sémantique de la participation." Montagnes, *Doctrine*, 10 (my translation).

60 Father Montagnes calls the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic aspects, "les éléments de la doctrine thomiste de l'analogie," the title of a chapter in which he discusses at length the substance-accident relationships with respect to those "elements." Montagnes, *Doctrine*, 23 and 31-35. E.g., Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1096a12-1097a13. It may be that Aristotle formulates *pros hen* analogy in response to the *aporia* which he uncovers in Plato's doctrine of the Forms. Part of the problem in Plato's doctrine is that things participate univocally in the Form when, in fact, things have a relationship to some primary reality which is at one and the same time common and diverse. This thought can only serve as a suggestion here since it goes far beyond the scope of this article.

respondent principle in Aristotle's broader metaphysics.[61] St. Thomas's use of the Neo-platonic doctrine of participation allows him to assert the reality of the nine accidental categories' ontological dependency upon substance which is the cause of those accidental categories. That is a statement of real being. But how can categories as diverse as quantity, quality, habitus, etc. all be caused by and dependent upon substance? *Pros hen* analogy provides the logical and semantic explanation: the causal dependence of the nine upon the one is simultaneously common and diverse. Participation and causality state the reality; analogy provides the language statement which explains how that reality works.

It would be difficult to over-estimate how important *pros hen* analogy was to St. Thomas's metaphysical thought. It was central to his understanding of reality's structure. At the same time, it is difficult for the typical twenty-first century philosopher to grasp that fact because analogy, in general, and *pros hen* analogy, in specific, is discredited as a mere form of equivocation, as has been noted above. What I suggest is that this chasm between what was obvious to St. Thomas, on the one hand, and the presuppositions of twentieth and twenty-first philosophers, on the other, present a special challenge to understanding the Third Way.

Pros hen Analogy as Implicit Principle in the Third Way

My argument is supported by but not dependent upon the correspondence between the argument of *SCG* 1, 15, 5 and the Third Way. I have shown that the language in *SCG* is consistent with language in which Aristotle—and Aquinas following him—explains *pros hen* analogy. I have also argued that the first half of the Third Way should be read as replacing the argument in the first part of *SCG* 1, 15, 5. Further, I have demonstrated the importance of *pros hen* analogy in St. Thomas's thought. One might counter that my argument regarding *pros hen* analogy has focused on predicamental analogy—accidents are united in the unified being of a substance—without showing that the same analysis applies to transcendental analogy—diverse substances and non-substances too, for that matter, which participate in higher order reality. For the purposes of my argument, I point out that my discussion of *pros hen* analogy begins with transcendental analogy, e.g., how drinking orange juice and urine relate to health.[62] It might be further asserted against my position that "health" does not exist in the way that, say, Traveller the horse existed. Here again, one sees St. Thomas's synthesis of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy: he needs Platonic participation to make *pros hen* analogy work transcendentally with respect to really existing entities. The synthesis is one he appropriates from Averroes, as Father Montagnes explains, "This reference to a first as St. Thomas understands it—following Averroes who himself gives precision to the theory of Aristotle—as an ontologically causal relation joining the analogues to the first."[63] The primary analogate causes the secondary analogates. While St. Thomas rec-

61 This idea was suggested to me in a conversation with Professor John Rist in which he asserted that Aristotle made claims which he had no metaphysical right to assert.

62 For a complete treatment of this question, see Montagnes, *Doctrine*, 65-114.

63 "Cette référence au premier, S. Thomas l'entend, à la suite d'Averroès qui lui-même précise la théorie d'Ar-

ognizes that Platonic participation is necessary to explain Aristotle's assertion, nevertheless the assertion is Aristotle's and not merely a later Thomistic (and Averroist) projection onto the Aristotelian text, as has been shown above in relation to *Metaphysics* 12.4.

To summarize, the first half of the Third Way is meant to show that there cannot only be possible beings in the world, because if there were only possible beings, in fact, there would be no beings which is patently absurd since there are now and at this very instant things which exist. We have already seen that there are major problems in the text of St. Thomas's argument when taken literally. Let us try a thought experiment, namely to suppose that as St. Thomas dictated the first half of the Third Way, he was, in fact, thinking of *pros hen* analogy and that he—presuming us to be reasonably good metaphysicians—supposed that we too would be thinking of *pros hen* analogy.[64] Does the argument now work? I suggest that his argument is that there cannot only be secondary analogates in the world, because then there would only be contingent beings—and here is the essential point—without a necessary being as primary analogate for the secondary analogates to be contingent upon. Eliminate the primary analogate, i.e., the first necessary being, eliminate the secondary analogates, i.e., all possible beings. As Father Dewan puts it: "There must exist a substance which is not a possible vis-à-vis being and not being. There must exist some *necessary being*, which precisely explains why there is something (the actuality of possible beings) rather than nothing (nothing whatsoever)."[65] Possible beings can explain each other in terms of their being "this" rather than "that," their existence in this form rather than in some other form, but not of their "foundational thatness," the fact of their existence at all.

The strong temporal aspect in the Third Way also suggests that points two through five are intended as a philosophical expansion of point two in the *SCG* 1, 15, 5 argument. Thus the temporal aspect is key.[66] His *reductio ad absurdum* argument is, on this point, that if there were only temporal beings, i.e., possible beings, none would now exist. That makes sense, if those temporal beings are secondary analogates. There must be an eternal being as stated in *SCG* 1, 15, 5, which is the primary analogate, thereby reading the temporal aspect of the Third Way with the eternal aspect of the *SCG* argument. Implic-

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istote, comme un rapport de causalité ontologique reliant les analogués au premier." Montagnes, *Doctrine*, 28 (my translation).

64 Monsignor Wippel makes a similar suggestion regarding the Fourth Way, there in regard to a Neoplatonic metaphysical principle: "One writer has suggested that perhaps his [St. Thomas's] powers of penetration were such that he immediately saw that varying degrees of transcendental perfection require a subsisting maximum to account for their imperfect realizations in the beings we experience. Within a Platonic and Neoplatonic framework, the self-evidence of such a claim might be more readily granted. But within Thomas's distinctive metaphysical approach, even though a considerable Platonic and Neoplatonic influence must be recognized, today's reader of his text may protest: the principle in question is not self-evident to him or her." Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 475.

65 Dewan, "'Something Rather Than Nothing,'" 75.

66 Here I follow Monsignor Wippel. Father Davies argues that the temporal aspect of the Third Way need not be read in a strong way. Davies, "Third Way," 456-57. Further, Father Owens' arguments are dispositive on this point: "The possibility is essentially conditioned by time. Time is metaphysically required for it." Owens, "*Quandoque*," 453. See also 455, 457-60.

it is that time is contingent upon eternity. If eternity were not a reality, time would simply not be possible.

Conclusion

I have argued for *pros hen* analogy as the key to resolve the apparent problems in St. Thomas's Third Way to prove the existence of God. To that end, I have correlated the arguments of Fathers Dewan and Davies in support of my argument and also showing where I use their arguments as a basis to advance my own, namely that the Third Way can and should be read as St. Thomas's explanation as to why a *per accidens* infinite series of possible beings is not an adequate explanation of how the world comes to exist at all. While Father Dewan does make reference to one-to-another analogy, unique to my argument is the use of Aristotle's development of *pros hen* analogy as a legitimate form of predication in his *Metaphysics*, observing how he contrasts *pros hen* analogical with equivocal predication in Book 4, with genus in 11 and with univocal predication in Book 12.

 In developing my argument for *pros he*n analogy as the key to resolving problems in the Third Way, I have distinguished between the natural contingency of possible beings in their temporal coming-to-be in contrast with the radical contingency of not only all possible beings but of all necessary beings as well save one, that first, uncaused, and eternally necessary being upon which all else is radically contingent, called God. There are then the completely possible beings of both natural and radical contingency, the relatively necessary beings not subject to natural contingency but subject to radical contingency, and the absolutely necessary being, upon which all other beings are radically contingent. There must be a necessary reality which is absolutely and eternally prior to all possible beings in time to all other necessary beings in eternity. All possible beings and all other necessary beings must be radically contingent upon that eternally prior necessary reality. Thus, that eternally prior necessary reality, God, is the primarily analogate upon which all other beings both necessary and possible are ontologically dependent. Without that eternally prior necessary reality no other being could exist. That is the point on which the Third Way turns, and it is only with respect to the metaphysical principle of pros hen analogy that that claim can be considered obvious. This investigation sets the principle of *pros hen* analogy in its rightful place as a legitimate and valuable philosophical principle and—at very least—to be acknowledged for its importance in the thought of both Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas.

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