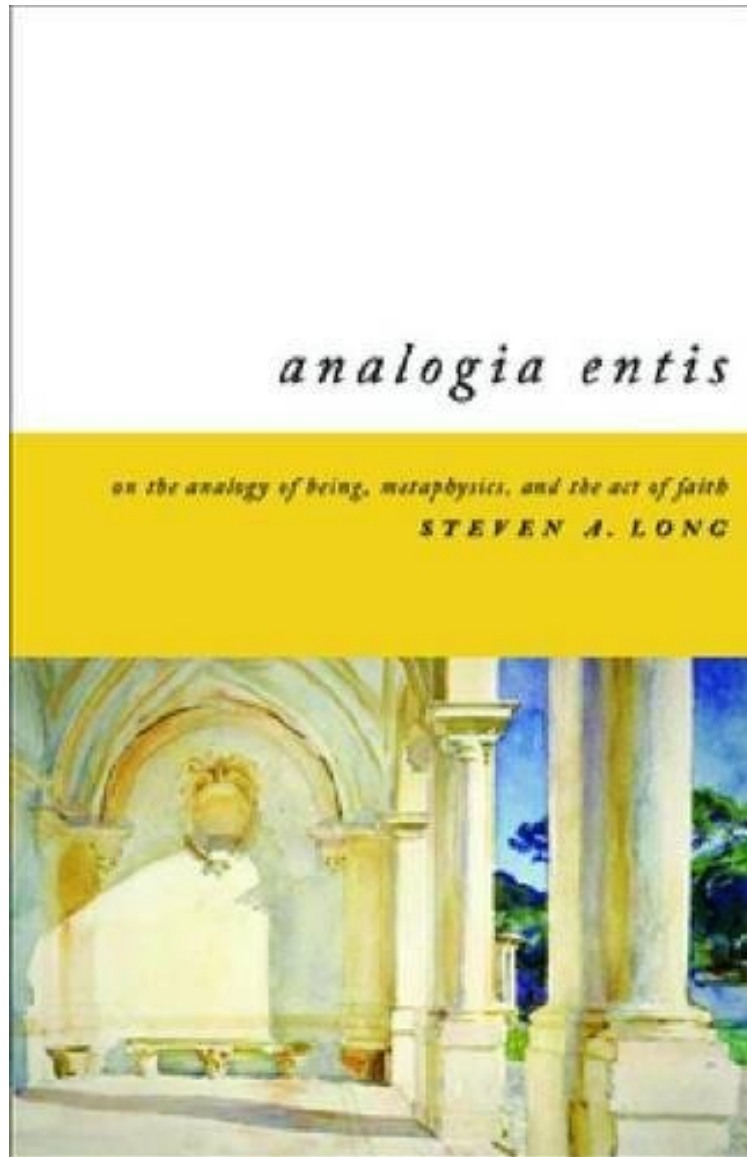


[Ebook pdf] Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith

# Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith

Steven A. Long

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#1908784 in Books 2011-11-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .50 x 6.00l, .55 #File Name: 0268034125152 pages | File size: 61.Mb

**Steven A. Long : Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. necessary advanced reading in Thomistic metaphysicsBy Vir

desideriorum Think of my review as supplemental to Stan's just below. Perhaps I'll disagree with Stan on his view that Long didn't have book-length material but only an article's worth. Well, I sympathize with this criticism largely because I think Long should have been included in T.J. White's edited anthology *THE ANALOGY OF BEING*, which would have required him to condense quite a bit and yes I agree that he could very well have done this. Perhaps White didn't invite him to submit, or perhaps he did and Long declined for the sake of putting out his own book, which is understandable (both books came out in 2011). At any rate, Long does indeed "hammer" away with a rhetorical dogmatism that is off-putting, but the substance of his view requires that one deal with him if one is serious about grappling with scholastic metaphysics and the thought of Aquinas as it is debated in today's literature--and this means (as goes Long's thesis) for those concerned with more than just the question of analogy. Long's argument, a call for a "return to Garrigou" (not his precise words, but yes) on the question of analogia entis, cuts against the historical arc of Aquinas reception since at least Aime Forest's *LA STRUCTURE METAPHYSIQUE DU CONCRET SELON SAINT THOMAS D'AQUIN* (1931), but in the end against the Gilsonian turn as well. These writers inaugurated a renaissance in Thomism that has redirected the reception of Aquinas towards an admittedly Aristotelianized (most definitely Christian and original) but still "Neoplatonic" metaphysics of participation, with the Christian doctrine of creation ex nihilo as the controlling background commitment. All this with an emphasis on the esse-essence distinction as opposed (or at least in contradistinction to) the act-potency Aristotelianism of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange. These are generalizations but they are generally true. Perhaps it was the work of Marie-Dominique Chenu and Etienne Gilson more so than Fabro, Geiger, and de Raeymaeker that helped the writers of the "Communio School" move away from the Cajetan-influenced Aristotelianism of the Leonine-revival period. However, a reader of such broadly Neoplatonic-Augustinian-Bonaventurian and personalist writers such as Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Joseph Ratzinger, and W. Norris Clarke will see evidence of the move to the concrete existing subject and the thinning out of the essence-esse distinction as traditionally understood (Clarke, or the occasional obliteration of the real distinction, cf. William Carlo, perhaps Rudi A. te Velde in the end--it seems to me he treads a very thin line), along with the emphasis on participation, in their thought--all characteristic of the "existential turn" in metaphysics. It is not to say that Long categorically rejects these historical developments--he does not. But he does stand in critique of the grounding of the personal subject in what he regards as a "free-floating relation" which is to be "taken as the metaphysical basis of the analogy of being and hence for theism." For Long this interpretation is "systematically untenable" and the result of the submerging of "speculative questions in historical obscurity." What is really happening here is a rebuke to personalist metaphysics which on Long's reading, in refusing to think of being and its analogical nature just as "the likeness of diverse rationes of act and potency" (a phrase you'll come to memorize well before the end of his book), ultimately undermines the only true philosophical preambula fidei that there is: the recognition that the being of nature is an act-potency composition which requires metaphysical certification in a first cause which is pure act--"what everyone calls God" as Aquinas famously wrote. Now Long does not stand alone in his insistence that the alleged move away from the analogy of proportionality as represented in the *DE VERITATE* of Aquinas has turned out to be based on a dubious argument. In short, the argument goes that there is an evolution in the thought of Aquinas on analogy of being and that his solution in *DE VERITATE* was temporary, a path he later rejected in the *CONTRA GENTILES* and *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE*. Long seems at first to find this view merely risible but in the end engages seriously enough with it to demonstrate his conviction of its power to persuade. Long's chief interlocutor here is the French Dominican of La Saulchoir, Bernard Montagnes (*THE DOCTRINE OF THE ANALOGY OF BEING ACCORDING TO THOMAS AQUINAS*, Fr. ed. 1963, Eng. 2004/2008). Montagnes' work is highly influential in subsequent literature and promises to continue and expand its influence in English language thought due to the recent English edition. T.J. White and Reinhard Hutter, for instance, both respect the fact that Montagnes' work now needs further historical and metaphysical contextualization, with White regarding proportionality and the unius ad alterum analogy "interlocking." Hutter leans more toward Montagnes, as does the participatory reading of Rudi te Velde. However, Long's Neo-Cajetanian Ressourcement project, if I may be permitted to coin a term, is quite distinguishable from the moderating positions of Hutter and White and certainly from the writers associated with *COMMUNIO* journal. I also note Long's other recent book *NATURA PURA* (2010) in which he gets similarly involved with Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Henri de Lubac on the Nature-Grace question. Another major selling-point of *NATURA PURA* is Long's dedication of an appendix to a criticism and lectio reverentialis--quite reverential but also quite critical--of Joseph Ratzinger on faith and reason. T.J. White, Hutter, Matthew Levering and other Thomist writers today have been to my mind variously involved in the attempt to receive, mediate, and contextualize de Lubac and Balthasar on Nature and Grace, since these latter have long since migrated from the outer edges of contemporary Catholic theology to its magisterial center, largely via the thought and teachings of Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI as well as the monumental publishing project of Joseph Fessio's Ignatius Press. But as for Long, rather think of him as the loyal opposition. While he is avowedly sympathetic with and admiring of Balthasar, de Lubac, and Ratzinger, he takes a critically intransigent position with respect to a number of their most central formulations. His views on the analogy of being and the priority of a metaphysical preambula fidei rooted in an absolute act-potency division of being are part and parcel with his advocacy of the older Thomism of "pure nature." Admirers of both

Ratzinger and "neo-scholasticism" should face squarely facts concerning the divergence of metaphysical and theological views represented by these two names, and Steven A. Long certainly does face such facts. If the abundance of references in this review have lost you in any serious way then you aren't ready for Long's books--he says himself that *ANALOGIA ENTIS* is not an introductory text, and indeed the reader finds himself in medias res from the opening page. But for the serious student of Aquinas who is involved in advanced undergraduate or (more likely) graduate work, or who has such work in his or her past and wants to keep up with the status questionis, this work of Long (and his other recent works), the dense and occasionally enervating prose style notwithstanding (it is the rough-and-tumble world of Thomism, after all), is essential reading, especially if the reader is willing to take another look at Montagnes and Klubertanz (and perhaps McInerney as well, for the conceptualist-logical reading of the analogy of being as the analogy of "being", a view with which Long, I believe rightly, refuses to associate himself). 5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Hammer contra fuzziness By STAN Long's objective is to remedy fuzziness in understanding of the analogy of being in some philosophers by the doctrinal proofs of Aquinas. This he Does and does and does, and does.... Reading chapter 3 on the considerations of objections is a exercise of patience in tedium. His answer is repeatedly banged into the heads of his readers : "It is upon the evidence of this being that is common to substance and the categories and divided by act and potency that causal reasoning mounts to the conclusion that God, pure act, transcending, ens commune, as its cause, exists." (now you dont need to buy the book!) The thesis is not so much explained and demonstrated as told, (and told...). This is unfortunate, as it would have then been a much more enjoyable and fruitful read. Much material and repetition could have been replaced by such an approach, and still have been a shorter book. (though it is not large). Otherwise, a retooling and culling of the material here would make a good submission for the appropriate journal, not a book.

*Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* is an intellectually rigorous and systematic account of Thomass teaching regarding the analogy of being. Steven A. Long's work stands in contradistinction to historical-doctrinal surveys and general introductions, retrieving by way of an interpretation of Aristotle and Aquinas the indispensable role that analogy of being plays for metaphysics and, consequently, for theology. In his later writings St. Thomas did not return to questions about the analogy of being that he had answered earlier in his career. This has led most historical-textual treatments of analogy in current scholarship to the mistaken conclusion that Thomas actually changed his answers to these questions. Scholars fail to see the continuity between his treatment in the *Summa theologiae* and his earlier *De veritate*. Long's study demonstrates the coherence of St. Thomass earlier and later analyses. It shows how Thomass later account in the *Summa theologiae* necessarily presupposes his earlier teaching. This is a book that invites the reader to a demanding and speculatively intense appreciation of the metaphysics of analogy. It will contribute significantly to the growing debate on the analogy of being.

*Analogia Entis* has a complex agenda. First the book intends to defend the theological value of the idea of the analogy of being understood as the analogy of proper proportionality founded on a division of being by act and potency. . . . Second, the author argues that this idea is to be found not only in Aquinass earlier works, but also remained central to the thought of Thomas Aquinas in his later works. Catholic Library World