ANALOGY:

MISCHIEF, MALICE, AND METAPHYSICS

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Anecdotal evidence more than suggests that college graduates entertain comic memories of Philosophy 100. The comedy can become explicit in *Dilbert,* a daily strip exploring corporate vagaries. A recent example comes to mind. "Wally," a veteran wage-slave, is trapped, mind adrift, in a meeting. Wait, now! Has Wally, tilting forward, fallen asleep? No, Dilbert explains; he's had a "paradigm shift." (My sincere apologies to Thomas Kuhn, long a victim of popularizers.)

Yet often the comic is a defense against the tragic. The negative thesis of this essay is that one of the tragedies with which we must now contend is that much of our public discourse muddles the language of analogy, and that too often the muddling is malicious. The positive thesis of this analysis, on the other hand, is that a realist metaphysics, of the kind rarely found in Philosophy 100, can help us put matters right. The essay argues, in addition, that such a realist metaphysics must continue to contest a perennial foe: an eviscerating nominalism that, if unchecked, would evacuate reason itself.

1. Mischief and Malice

Perhaps the reader will find the negative and critical thesis seems unduly severe. Often enough, it is only mischief, not malice, which muddles our public discourse—especially when it takes on a commercial accent. As a longtime "Emeril wannabe," I recently joined the Good Cook Book Club. We ought not to complain too much about the Club's warm e-mail welcome to its cyberspace "community of readers," even though the missive comes with easy to follow "let's get down to business" steps for efficient online payments.

But, mischief can range from the mild to the mystifying. My academic colleagues speak of "changing the culture," not of academe, but of our small college of liberal arts. Journalists write about the "community" of millions of Latinos in the Los Angeles area. Publicists extol the "family" of Wal-Mart employees. We might ask, to be sure,

how much this mischief truly matters. Perhaps we can allow some leeway for the vagaries of "socio-babble." Nobody would confuse it with, say, *science* and its sober demands. Another clip from *Dilbert* captures the difference. Our not so dynamic duo, Dilbert and Wally, are called to a meeting with their "pointy-haired boss." Grimly, the boss announces that the CEO plans to change, not the company's corporate culture, but its DNA. "This," says the fearful boss, "sounds medical."

But when malice becomes midwife to mischief, we'd best be on alert. In some institutional quarters, legal and even ecclesiastical, we are now instructed to speak of the "marriage," not only of a husband and a wife, but of those with same-sex attraction. And recently organizers of the Rose Bowl Parade, with their theme "Celebrate Family," looked for homosexual "families" to enlist. Nonsense on stilts gives way to fantasy on floats, and somewhere along the line it's time to draw a line.

What's going wrong? At one level, the problem is "inflationary" language that ignores basic distinctions. There is a place for verbal exuberance, even extravagance. But we should largely reserve this space for sports writers—and the financial reporters who monitor our *plunging*, *soaring*, or *wildly oscillating* stock markets. If philosophers, however, want to help form a responsible citizenry, they would do better to speak of the *tone* of a small liberal arts college, of the Latino *population*, and of an *association* of Wal-Mart employees. My college, after all, is far too small and derivative to have its own culture, and the millions of Latinos in the Los Angeles region are far too many and disparate to be a community.[1] (In contrast, reports of a San Pedro "tattoo community" are suspect if only because its denizens are far too few and too transient.[2])

In several contexts, indeed, linguistic license can put us in peril. Wal-Mart employees who confuse their employer with their parents do

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[1] Here I can only acknowledge the importance of T. S. Eliot's discussion of culture understood analogously. He distinguishes among the culture of the individual, of the group, and of society as a whole. For an analysis of this, see Tracey Rowland's *Culture and the Thomist Tradition after Vatican II* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), beginning with pp. 20-21.

[2] "Tattoo You," by Joshua Stecker, *Long Beach Press-Telegram's San Pedro Magazine*, July, 2005, p. 26.

so at their own risk. Another pair of examples implicates familiar hazards. In the 2002-2003 school year, teacher and staff absenteeism in the Los Angeles Unified School District cost taxpayers more than $432 million. What's the explanation? The district identifies a "culture of entitlement" as the culprit, and thereby neither explains nor remedies anything.[3] And the London-based petrochemical firm, BP, has of late been under investigation for its poor safety record. OSHA, citing employee lapses, observed that BP managers at a Texas refinery "don't have a culture of safety that looks at all the details."[4] This diagnosis is more likely to obscure than to expose individual worker negligence.

A variety of reasons can explain why people resort to inflationary language and ignore basic distinctions. Simple laziness, no doubt, is one. Other reasons are more sinister: the world, and an appetite for its attention; the flesh, and our desire for its excitement; and the devil in his role as the Father of Lies. But the analysis of such reasons seldom falls to the philosopher. My focus in what follows will be the way in which inflationary and referentially un-tethered language disregards distinctive structural realities. Far too often, we speak of culture, of community, and of family in an analogically attenuated way without respecting what constitutes these fundamental human realities. Nor can we honor what constitutes them, much less recognize why it is honorable, unless we grasp the kind of reality that only a *primary* culture or community or family can fully exhibit.

Malice predictably and eagerly plays midwife to mischief when some deliberately misuse the flexible language of analogy to advance their partisan interests. Often, too, such malice recruits and enlists disordered emotions in exploiting a species of logical confusion about primary structures. This maneuver is transparently at work in the critical case of marriage. Whatever its trials, marriage has a profound appeal. The wellspring of this appeal is the complementarity of its "two-in-one-flesh" communion. Yet, articulating the full structure of

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[3] "Teacher absenteeism costs school district millions," by Melissa Milios, *Daily Breeze*, June 24, 2004, A13-14.

[4] See "An Oil Giant Faces Questions About a Deadly Blast in Texas," by Chip Cummins and Thaddeus Herrick, in *The Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 2005, Section A, p. 1.

primary marriage makes philosophical demands, especially if one's philosophical vocabulary is impoverished. Thus, it becomes easy enough to coin a same-sex imitation of marriage. Left unchecked, this false currency further devalues our public discourse.

2. Metaphysics

My first and negative thesis, then, is merely diagnostic: examples are ready at hand to show how public discourse muddles the language of analogy, and sometimes with malice aforethought.

But my second and positive thesis, to which I now turn, is constructive. A robust, realist metaphysics can help counteract muddling, and even mischief. In the analysis that follows, I explore two resources for such a realist metaphysics. For the first of these resources, we are indebted to the "early" John Wild (later he was to make a "phenomenological turn"). Wild's analysis appealed to what he termed an "end-ordered" noetic reality. His analysis of social groups in light of such a reality is of critical interest. Neither reductive nor inflationary in his thinking, Wild understands the nature of a group in terms of "*a single end, rationally held in mind by the different members.*"[5] A realist account of community, I argue, might well begin with Wild's proposal, although it should go beyond it. The second resource is what W. Norris Clarke, S.J., presents as the category of "system." Treating it as a necessary supplement to Aristotle's categories, Clarke identifies system as an accident that occurs in many subjects at once. As such, it is an irreducible mode of unity.[6] A successful realist account of marriage and its sexual complementarity, I will argue, can make good use of Clarke's analysis of "system," although it does need further specification.

In fashioning a realist account of community, we might usefully start by contrasting it with a pair of sharply divergent, and badly flawed, opposing views: reductive individualism and, its theoretical

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[5] John Wild, *Introduction to Realistic Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 180-89.

[6] W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), pp. 135-36.

opposite, a kind of quasi-ontological reificationism. The individualist view, on the one hand, is that a community is nothing more than the individuals who compose it. The reduction is ontological. The individualist, moreover, often keeps company with the egoist, who, in turn, insists that we act, or should act, only out of self-interest. Given the views of such an alliance, any group, however noble, will upon inspection reduce to converging individual interests.

This reductive individualism, however, faces its own problems. The first is that it dissolves community by undermining the social character of the human person. The communities in which we live shape who we are. We do not habitually, much less inescapably, cobble together our communities simply to advance our private interests. (Doubtless on occasion our behavior is thus indictable, but no one supposes otherwise. Human failure does not constitute a philosophy.) Second, this reductive individualism erodes the moral dimension of community. Some social structures markedly advance, while others dramatically imperil, our flourishing. We are responsible for both sorts of structures; but they can nonetheless reach, with a cumulative perplexity, beyond our individual actions. The logical analysis of this cumulative dimension can prove elusive, but our experience of it is only too familiar. The enduring legacy of racism, with its polymorphous perversity, is but one example.[7]

On the other hand, a quasi-ontological reification of community is as flawed as reductive individualism. Such reification is especially ominous when it makes an idol of the nation as a community. A sense of individual powerlessness is one source of this idolatry. Because a community is often temporally prior to its members, its power and scope frequently extend beyond that of its individual members. But whatever its source, such reifying of community is badly mistaken.

It is mistaken, first, because any group can act only insofar as its individual members act. It is mistaken, second and more pointedly, because social sin is the sin of flesh and blood human beings. In speaking bluntly about the "structure of sin," John Paul the Great underscored the indispensable role of personal agency.

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[7] For a theological analysis of racism, see *Brothers and Sisters to Us: U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism in Our Day* (United States Catholic Conference, 1979).

> It is a case of the very personal sins of those who cause or support evil or who exploit it; of those who are in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils but who fail to do so [...]; of those who take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world, and also of those who sidestep the effort and sacrifice required, producing specious reasons of a higher order.[8]

John Paul's judgment emphasizes that no social structure can dissolve individual responsibility. While it is a mistake to see a group as nothing but its individual members, it is also a mistake to suppose that a group could itself be an ontological "super" person or could somehow take moral priority over the person. Both errors distort human nature by misreading human agency.

How, then, might we develop a satisfactory and realist account of community? Let's turn, for the moment, to a full statement of John Wild's proposal. "*The human group is a set of diverse, individual activities made one by their common reference to a single end, rationally held in mind by the different members.*"[9] Note well: Wild presents the group (and not, say, a heap or a herd) as a distinct reality; it is one which is made so by an intelligible and shared end. But since he chooses to define a *group* rather than a *community*, we need to recognize some critical distinctions between the two.

One distinction is that not all groups are communities, at least not in the morally relevant sense. In our ordinary conversation we readily recognize this important difference. Members of a particular group frequently recognize that they fall short of being a community; and, for just this reason, they struggle to become a community. Such a group, as it happens, might fall short of being a community, and even have no prospects of becoming one, in at least two different ways. First, the group might pursue an already disordered end. A business cartel, for instance, might be negotiating to put together a greedy and exploitative monopoly. Second, another group, with a distorted notion of how to achieve its goal, might pursue a legitimate end and yet do so

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[8] John Paul II, "Apostolic Exhortation: *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*," (December 2, 1984), AAS 77 (1985): 217.

[9] Wild, *Introduction to Realistic Philosophy*, pp. 185-86.

in a badly mistaken way. An advocacy group, as an instance, might oppose a wrongheaded scheme for commercial land development. The group's end is worthy. Yet the group might seek its goal in a distorted way, for example, by blocking low-income housing. In contrast to both such groups, an authentic community, in the morally relevant sense, shows that it shares as its transformative good both a worthy end and a right understanding of how to achieve it. Thus, for a welcome and familiar example, a local community of advocates for the homeless might come together in a series of Habitat for Humanity projects.

At this juncture a further distinction, important in the literature of community, is in order. *Not* every community, in the morally relevant sense, need be what sociologists, following Ferdinand Tonnies, term a *gemeinschaft.*[10] The logically specifying difference is that while we can and often do come together to form a community, for example, of "concerned citizens," the fashioning of a *gemeinschaft*, in that it is an affective phenomenon, never begins with calling a meeting, setting an agenda, and identifying a shared goal. On this point, I find myself parting company with Jacques Maritain's distinction between a community as "more of a work of nature" and a society as "more of a work of reason," insofar as it implies that there is no such thing as an intentional, in contradistinction to a natural, community.[11]

What, then, do these various distinctions suggest? Taken together, they help to suggest that a community involves the shared and dynamic pursuit of an emerging common good rather than merely a fleeting convergence of individual interests. The following definition satisfactorily reflects this understanding: *A community is an alliance of persons who share a unified pattern of activities and a reflective pursuit of a common good.* Not surprisingly, though, some further clarification is in order.

Note that on this proposed definition human persons are prior to their activities. John Crosby, in carefully rejecting Max Scheler's notion of community as "quasi-personal," speaks to the point at issue. Against Scheler, with whom he is often in sympathy, Crosby rightly insists that:

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[10] See Ferdinand Tonnies's classic *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1887).

[11] Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), p. 2.

"[A] collective person presupposes individual persons and exists only in and through them and apart from them is nothing at all (though of course it is more than the sum of them)."[12] This something "more," we are to understand, is a moral reality rather than a substantial reality.

And what is "the common good" to which the proposed definition would refer us? This common good is the whole range of material and cultural preconditions that enables us to pursue the basic personal and shared goods, taken together with the integrated realization of these several goods.[13] Unlike the narrowly utilitarian good, the common good integrates rather than maximizes. For this reason, we dare not abstract the common good from flesh and blood persons. Thus, Jacques Maritain's "law of redistribution" proposes that the common good, though superior to individual goods, should return to the persons who constitute the community. His "law of transcendence," in turn, emphasizes that it is not political units but rather persons who are eternal. For this reason, the common good, by its nature, "must favor their progress toward the absolute goods which transcend political society."[14]

From working out an account of community, with an assist from John Wild, we can next turn to W. Norris Clarke's category of "system," a second resource for realist metaphysics. For Clarke, *system* is a category of being, specifically, an irreducible mode of unity. "[I]t is not as strong a unity as a substance, so has no single characteristic action of the whole as such. But it is a stronger mode of unity than just the sum of many different interactions or relations."[15] The members of a system share together in a singular relationship, and we cannot reduce this

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[12] John F. Crosby, *Personalist Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), p. 190.

[13] Vatican II presents the common good as "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment..." (Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes*, 26, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et spes_en.html).

[14] Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 76.

[15] Clarke, *The One and the Many*, p. 136.

relationship to a mere plurality of accidental relations keyed to their respective *relata*.

The importance of system as a mode of unity is enormous. Clarke notes that systems everywhere order reality and that all real beings participate in multiple systems. Indeed, we are by nature "related to ... other beings and systems of them."[16] Thus, he points out, "we may justly say that both substantiality and relationality are primordial dimensions of reality."[17] To ignore, then, either dimension is to misconstrue badly the structure of being. Given the extraordinary array of possible systems and the range of beings that participate in them, we must pay critical attention to the structure of distinct systems. Thus, for example, theologians from Augustine to Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) have emphasized the relational structure of the Trinity.[18] At the level of social and political analysis, Clarke himself distinguishes between person-focused systems that tend to develop the individual and totalitarian systems that seek to submerge the individual.[19]

Here, though, I wish to treat marriage, itself a distinctive instance of community, as a unique system. What kind of reality do we find in the *primary* marriage of man and woman? It is a relational, rather than a substantial, reality. It is, most distinctively, both consensual and sexual. As consensual it is deliberate and voluntary; as sexual, it is unitive and procreative. In their mating, man and woman become a single reproductive principle.[20] Thus their marriage can embody a self-giving mutuality that is, literally, the core matrix of the entire human enterprise. Finally, of course, it is always the man and the woman, as persons, who act to form a single reproductive principle and to foster a

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Tracey Rowland underscores the significance of system and relationality in her *Culture and the Thomist Tradition after Vatican II*, especially pp. 82, 95, 110, and 142.

[19] Clarke, *The One and the Many*, p. 137.

[20] For a development of this proposition, see Robert George, *The Clash of Orthodoxies: Law, Religion, and Morality in Crisis* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2001), pp. 77-80.

self-giving mutuality. A marriage, as such, since it is not a substance, can never function as an agent.

To be sure, we sometimes speak of marriage in other than its primary structure. But in doing so we should distinguish between the insightful and misshapen analogues of the primary structure. Consider some familiar examples of the latter. "He's married to his career." Yes, in a sense; but should he be? No, because a career is not a person. Or, again: "They're wedded to the project." It is better, if possible, that they wed one another. After all, no project can aspire to be a person—and even the best of projects must be put aside if its funding is not renewed.

But let us turn from the perhaps mischievously figurative use of "marriage" to the vigorously sponsored and abruptly commonplace locution "same-sex marriage." Its referent is neither unitive nor procreative. What, then, is the genesis of its referent? What is its purpose? As for its genesis, it is an artifact of the libido and the affections; it is, moreover, driven by economic and social policy concerns. Its purpose is to win social recognition. It demands the civic endorsement of instrumentalized "sex acts" and financial benefits for those who commit to a (relatively) stable engagement therein. Regardless of its genesis and purpose, and more might be said about both, same-sex marriage, as a matter of legal statute, is a *fait accompli*; its widening legal establishment is highly probable. But the philosopher, if not the sociologist, persists: *should* "same-sex marriage" be so endorsed and rewarded?

Perhaps an analogy will sharpen the philosopher's question. In the bell weather State of California, there happens to be a movement to license astrologers. If it succeeds, some astrologers will proclaim themselves to have finally come of age. Money, status, and pride are at stake. But there's also a resistance to the movement. Objectors, quite sensibly, contend that licensing astrologers will lead some people to confuse them with astronomers. Some people, predictably, will be artfully led to think that astrologers are somehow aligned with astronomers--the worthy practitioners of the noble, ancient, and *primary* science of astronomy. Philosophers, I submit, should join, nay, lead the resistance!

But here the reader might cry "foul!" After all, am I not now putting forth an argument by analogy against what I criticize as the fiction of

"same-sex marriage?" Given my warnings against the abuse of analogical language, how can I now argue from such an analogy when it suits my own purposes? Such a reader deserves a prompt reply, and I respond as follows. On the one hand, every analogy limps, and some do so from malice. On the other hand, analogy can be illuminating. In diagnosing the inappropriateness of analogizing homosexual partnership to heterosexual marriage, I hope to make matters more, and not less, perspicuous. We might well pause, then, to explore the pair of analogies at issue.

Let's note, to begin, two decidedly relevant points of similarity between the recognizing of "same sex marriage" and the licensing of astrologers. The first point of comparison is the matter of a basic incapacity to achieve a purported goal. Astrologers, as such, cannot effect a science, no matter how long or ardently they might attempt to do so. Neither can same sex partners effect a marriage, no matter how long nor ardently might they attempt to do so. The second point of comparison is the type of incentives that lead some to deny the respective core incapacities to achieve purported goals. Licensing astrologers would bring them both economic and social advantages; practitioners would move from the margins to the mainstream. In like fashion, the statutory recognition of same-sex unions promises economic and social advantages to those who attempt them.

The chief points of *dis*similarity in the analogies at issue are, it happens, also two. The first is that astrology centers on superstition, often marketed as an enlightening *gnosis*. Same-sex unions, in contrast, center on libido, often marketed as a liberating *eros*. But neither superstition nor libido, *a fortiori* as so marketed, merit special legal entitlements. Second, astrology is, and has long been, empirically and irreparably falsified. In contrast, advocates of same-sex unions can still predict that a sterilized sexuality will escape trivialization and publicly project rosy futures for children who are denied, whether by adoptive strategy or reproductive technique, either a father or a mother.

Given the second of this pair of dissimilarities between licensing astrologers and validating same-sex unions, I argue that the case for such unions proves to have even less merit than the manifestly weak case for licensing astrologers. Astrology is a "thinkable" science in that the stars *could* affect our lives other than they in fact do. Same-sex

marriage, however, fails to exist in any of the countless possible worlds. Male and female complementarity and a unitive self-donation of a procreative nature are impossible for members of the same sex, unless male is no longer male and female is no longer female.

Given this review of the pair of analogies at issue, the objection that despite my warnings of analogical abuse, I have myself resorted to an abusive analogy fails. But, there is a deeper objection, both logical and metaphysical, to my case against same-sex "marriages" that now demands attention.

3. The Specter of Nominalism

In making my case against counterfeit analogies in general, and same-sex "marriages" in particular, I must acknowledge the ever-lurking specter of nominalism. How, at this juncture, might the nominalist proceed? First, I suspect, our nemesis would favor us with a sigh of regret. Then he would begin his bantering riposte. "Are you done rehearsing your complaints? We've heard it all before. You're no metaphysician. You're a miserable word maven. Language—don't you see?—changes to meet our changing needs. If it suits us, we can call any group whatever we choose to call it. A community, you say? That's the kind of thing we *designate.* Ditto a culture. If you realists want to *discover* something, why not search the sky for a new comet?"

"Popular language communicates and communication," continues the nominalist, "covers a multitude of supposed logical sins. Besides, logic is 'after the fact.' The fact is that we're reshaping our concepts of culture and community, of family and marriage. Philosophers and politicians have reshaped the concepts of truth and freedom, not to mention the American Way. Enough of your realist rant and rhetoric!"

And how should I reply? "It is, sir, because communication counts that language must lay hold of what is real. Make-believe cultures, *ersatz* communities, *faux* families, and "same-sex" marriages only communicate failure. Legal fiction, no doubt, can emulate science fiction. The courts might re-cast marriage as any close sexual relationship that pleases adults, no matter the link between intercourse and procreation. If so, adults would first of all fail their children. But, with so slippery a slope, they would proceed to undermine their own

intimacy. Such "close relationships," after all, need not be limited to two persons.[21] For the polyamorous, three is hardly a crowd.

Suitably engaged, I would press on. "Nor is logic 'after the fact.' Logic is 'in the fact.' Absent logic we cannot speak of facts at all, and whatever it is we are speaking of, we are caught in doublespeak. *Sans* logic, everything is what it is and the opposite, and anything else as well. Yet, the truth is that everything is what it is and not another thing. If words mean whatever we want them to mean and if their referents are whatever we take them to be, then the doctrine of non-contradiction fails. But at what cost does it fail? As W. V. O. Quine noted, "when [the deviant logician] tries to deny the doctrine he only changes the subject."[22] And do you speak of truth, freedom, and the American Way? Why, sir, show remorse for the havoc that nominalists have wrecked with them, and then we will speak again."

Yet in so rebuking my nemesis, I might satisfy myself more than a dispassionate reader. Such a reader, perhaps, might ask whether I should not offer a more measured reply; and the question would be legitimate.

Despite the limits of space, I *can* indicate the trajectory of a more fundamental reply to the nominalist. For a reply measured with the deepest of measures, I would turn to the theologian Angelo Scola.[23] He highlights, to contest sharply, what some take to be a formidable, even insurmountable, objection to John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et ratio.* The objection is, indirectly but critically, relevant to my own argument thus far. The charge at issue is that the encyclical, in trying to harmonize faith and reason, assumes too much. It wrongly assumes that, when we

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[21] For an instructive analysis of the legal model of "close relationship" marriage, see "The Future of Family Law: Law and the Marriage Crisis in North America, a Report from the Council on Family Law," Dan Cere, Principal Investigator, Institute for American Values, 2005. Email: info@americanvalues.org.

[22] W. V. O. Quine, *Philosophy of Logic,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 81. Robert Hanna recalls this quip in his *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 283.

[23] Angelo Cardinal Scola is Patriarch of Venice.

come to the heart of things, analogy - any true analogy—*is even possible.* Nor, opine said objectors, need we deny Being in order to sustain this objection. They permit us, rather, to admit Being along with its retinue of attending metaphysicians. It matters not, the critics insist, because Being does not disclose itself. In the beginning, and in the end, there is only and ultimately silence. Nor can Thomists hope for anything from their master. Scola's analysis of the critics' case takes an historical turn. "[T]he majestic intellectual architecture that Thomas brought to completion on the basis of the analogy of being collapsed, they insist, under its own weight when Ockham boldly asserted that everything is a mere *name* because even analogy tells us nothing about the *thing.*"[24]

Keen to their challenge, Scola asks, "How, then, do we respond to this unsparing criticism, which perhaps gives us the key to deciphering a number of contradictory cultural, political, and social phenomena, at least in the West?"[25] Not being a rationalist, his answer makes no appeal to an absolute reason, a Reason that might somehow intimidate Being. Scola's answer is, however, profoundly realist; it is illuminatingly personalist as well. The answer, for the Catholic, is that we are to rediscover Being, to rediscover the One, as *self-revealing.* The human person continually approaches this recovery in a life that freely embraces the real. In Jesus, we find the primary act of abandonment to the One, an act that expresses the primary structure of love. "It is just here," Scola writes, "that we begin to see the import of the gratuitous event of Jesus Christ. For it is Christ who, in his singular person, achieves the *analogia entis* within the *analogia libertatis.*"[26]

In virtue of the Incarnation, one might add, the insight that the best venue for articulating an explanatory metaphysics lies in our interpersonal relationships becomes theologically decisive. No such relationship is more profound than the nuptial relationship that opens

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[24] Angelo Scola, "The Integrity of Human Experience," in *Restoring Faith in Reason*, edited by Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), p. 263. For a fuller context, see Scola's *The Nuptial Mystery* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2005).

[25] Ibid., p. 263.

[26] Ibid., p. 264.

love to life. W. Norris Clarke, indeed, reminds us that Jacques Maritain's thesis, "There is a nuptial relationship between mind and reality," honors the analogical richness of this bond.[27] Indeed, Mary, in her humility, understood this most profoundly of all. For this reason, the Catholic tradition acclaims her, Bride of the Spirit and *Theotokos*, as the Seat of Wisdom.[28]

4. Envoi

This essay has offered only the broad outlines of an argument for its twofold thesis. Still, the thesis is significant. Negatively, I have argued that much of our public discourse muddles the language of analogy and that it sometimes does so with malice aforethought. Positively, I have argued that a realist metaphysics can help put matters right and that John Wild, W. Norris Clarke, and Angelo Scola have given us valuable help for doing so.

But for this thesis to be fully vested and thoroughly developed, we must wait upon more sustained reflection. Indeed, if we are to overcome popular culture, we must also wait upon—to paraphrase Alasdair MacIntrye—both a new George Orwell, for plain speaking, and a new Mark Twain, for comic unmasking. And may both stalwarts come among us as Thomists. Lastly, while we await such estimable allies, let us be cautious. Language has its canny counterfeiters; its referents have their malign mystifiers. Yves Simon dealt with both in times as perilous as ours, and he has put us on alert. "[I]n human affairs, counterfeit is so related to genuine form that it appears, with disquieting frequency, precisely where the genuine form is most earnestly sought."[29]

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[27] Clarke, *The One and the Many*, p. 39.

[28] *Fides et Ratio* #108 explores this theme.

[29] Yves R. Simon, *A General Theory of Authority* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), p. 27.