Signification and Modes of Signifying in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A Preface to Aquinas on Analogy

E. J. Ashworth

In 1935 M. D. Chenu wrote, "Preoccupied as we are with such leading figures as Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, we all too easily lose sight of the massive dialectical learning which provided the foundation for both the teaching and the general thought-patterns of thirteenth-century masters."[1] Unfortunately, Chenu's words have not been well heeded, and one of the outstanding features of the extensive literature on Aquinas's doctrine of analogy is the complete absence of any attempt to set him in the context of contemporary logic.[2] Some attempt has been made to read him in terms of specula-

1. M. D. Chenu, "Grammaire et théologie aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," *AHDLMA* 10 (1935–1936): 7: "Tout occupés que nous sommes par les grandes figures d'un Thomas d'Aquin et d'un Bonaventure, nous perdons de vue trop facilement la massive culture dialectique qui constitué la base de l'enseignement et la mentalité générale des maîtres du XIIIe siècle." Chenu's paper is still well worth reading.
2. An exception to this remark is provided by a paper which has just appeared: Alain de Libera, "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de

tive grammar,[3] but this is unhelpful so far as equivocation and analogy are concerned, since speculative grammarians did not usually take up these topics.[4] So far as logicians are concerned, the most frequently cited figure is Cajetan, who was writing over two centuries later, and who discussed these matters from a perspective that is far removed from that of the thirteenth century, particularly with respect to general theories of signification. Yet thirteenth-century logicians did discuss equivocation and analogy, sometimes at considerable length, and it is at least worthwhile considering what they had to say.

My study of Aquinas in the context of thirteenth-century logic has two parts. In the first part, which constitutes the present essay, I shall explore the general theory of language that lies behind theories of equivocation and analogy. I shall explain such key concepts as imposition, signification, and res significata, and I shall pay particular attention to the notion of modi significandi. In the second part, to be published separately,[5] I shall survey thirteenth-century accounts of equivocation from Peter of Spain to John Duns Scotus. I shall show how the discussion of analogy came to be subsumed under discussions of equivocation and how logicians developed a threefold classification

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l'être," Les études philosophiques 3/4 (1989): 319–345. However, De Libera is more concerned with metaphysical than with logical issues.

3. See, for instance, a recent paper by Keith Buersmeyer, "Aquinas on the Modi Significandi," The Modern Schoolman 64 (1987): 73–95. The paper has an interesting discussion of the relations between modi essendi, modi intelligendi, and modi significandi in Aquinas, though it is marred by not using recent sources on speculative grammar, including the various text editions now available. For a very interesting use of speculative grammar to interpret Aquinas on the language of the sacraments, see Irène Rosier, "Signes et sacrements: Thomas d'Aquin et la grammaire spéculative," Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques 74 (1990): 392–436.

4. Boethius of Dacia refers the reader to his questions on the Sophistical Refutations for a discussion of equivocation. See his Opera: Modi significandi sive quaestiones super Priscianum Maiorem, edited by Jan Pinborg and Heinrich Roos, CPDMA 4.2 (Copenhagen: Gad, 1969), p. 128. John of Dacia does include a discussion of equivocation in his Summa grammatica, as in his Opera, edited by Alfred Otto, CPDMA 1.1 (Copenhagen: Gad, 1955), pp. 364–386. He seems, however, to have borrowed from an earlier commentary on the Sophistical Refutations: see the anonymous Quaestiones super Sophisticos Elenchos, edited by Sten Ebbesen, CPDMA 7 (Copenhagen: Gad, 1977), p. xxxvi (I shall refer to this work as CPDMA 7).

5. See my "Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A New Approach to Aquinas," forthcoming in Mediaeval Studies.

of analogy that has a close relation to Aquinas's own classification in his *Sentences*-commentary.

In embarking on this study, I am guided by the belief that to understand Aquinas fully we need to know how his words would have been understood by his contemporaries. We need to know which phrases had a standard technical usage and what distinctions were routinely made. I do not intend to argue that we will always find just one correct interpretation, nor do I want to claim that Aquinas was never innovative in his use of material taken from logicians. I am convinced, however, that a careful reading of the logicians will not only show us which interpretations of Aquinas's philosophy of language can be ruled out as fanciful reconstructions, but will also shed light on much that is currently obscure to the twentieth-century reader.

TERMINOLOGY AND TEXTS

So far as terminology is concerned, I shall stick to the term 'equivocation', in the nonpejorative medieval sense, since it covers both the case of homonymy ("two or more words having the same pronunciation and/or spelling") and polysemy ("one word having two or more senses").[6]

Moreover, to speak of 'equivocation' avoids the problem that proper names provided a standard example of pure equivocation, whereas one might not want to say that a proper name is polysemous. It is also important to make a preliminary observation about the word 'analogy'. In Aristotle's Greek, *analogia* was used to refer to a similarity of two proportions involving at least four terms. What came to be called *analogia* in thirteenth-century Latin covered what Aristotle called *pros hen* equivocation. The word in its new use apparently first appeared in translations of Averroes's commentaries on Aristotle, and by about 1250 it had been absorbed into the logic textbooks, within discussions of equivocation.[7] People were aware that the Greek *analogia* was the same as the Latin *proportio*, but little was made of this by logicians until the sixteenth century.

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6. For these definitions, see Geoffrey Leech, *Semantics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 228. Homographs with a different pronunciation were not regarded as equivocal.

7. For details, see the paper cited in note 5.

The texts of which I shall make most use fall into two groups. First, there are logical *summulae* from the first half of the thirteenth century, especially those by Peter of Spain and William of Sherwood from the 1230s and by Lambert of Auxerre and Roger Bacon from around 1250.[8] Second, there is a series of commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories* and *Sophistical Refutations*. Those by Albert the Great are from before 1270,[9] but the rest were all written by logicians working at the University of Paris between 1270 and 1300.[10] Probably the earliest of these is Martin of Dacia's commentary on the *Categories*.[11] Next comes Giles of Rome on the *Sophistical Refutations*, together with the commentary on the *Categories* which has been ascribed to him.[12] From about 1275 we have an anonymous commentator on the *Sophistical*

8. Peter of Spain, *Tractatus Called Afterwards "Summule Logicales,"* edited by L. M. de Rijk (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972). For William of Sherwood, see Charles H. Lohr with Peter Kunze and Bernhard Mussler, "William of Sherwood, *Introductiones in Logicam:* Critical Text," *Traditio* 39 (1983): 219–299. For an English translation of William of Sherwood, see Norman Kretzmann, *William of Sherwood's Introduction to Logic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966). For Lambert of Auxerre, *Logica (Summa Lamberti)*, edited by Franco Alessio (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1971). For Roger Bacon, Alain de Libera, "Les *Summulae dialectices* de Roger Bacon," *AHDLMA* 53 (1986): 139–289; 54 (1987): 171–278.

9. Albert the Great, *Liber de Praedicamentis*, in *Opera omnia*, edited by Auguste Borgnet (Paris: Vivès, 1890), vol. 1; and *Liber I Elenchorum: Tractatus II*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 2.

10. For full details of dating, see the introduction to CPDMA 7, *passim*, and the introduction to Simon of Faversham, *Quaestiones super libros Elenchorum*, edited by Sten Ebbesen, Thomas Izbicki, John Longeway, Francesco del Punta, Eileen Serene, and Eleonore Stump (Toronto: PIMS, 1984), *passim*. It will be noted that I am using only printed texts, nearly all of which are available in good modern editions. For references to manuscripts, see Charles H. Lohr, "Medieval Latin Aristotle Commentaries," *Traditio* 23 (1967): 313–413; 24 (1968): 149–245; 26 (1970): 135–216; 27 (1971): 251–351; 28 (1972): 281–396; 29 (1973): 93–197. For a list of *Categories* commentaries from this period, see Robert Andrews, *Peter of Auvergne's Commentary on Aristotle's "Categories": Edition, Translation, and Analysis*, 2 vols. (Dissertation, Cornell University, 1988), 1:6–7. For references to manuscripts of commentaries on the *Sophistical Refutations*, see the numerous works by Ebbesen listed in the bibliography of Sten Ebbesen, "The Way Fallacies Were Treated in Scholastic Logic," *CIMAGL* 55 (1987): 107–134.

11. Martin of Dacia, *Quaestiones super librum Praedicamentorum*, in *Opera*, edited by Heinrich Roos, CPDMA 2 (Copenhagen: Gad, 1961), pp. 153–263.

12. Since the ascription is not certain, the dating of this text cannot be certain either. I base my remarks about the uncertainty of ascription on Andrews, *Peter of Auvergne's Commentary on Aristotle's "Categories,"* 1:53, n. 36. For the two texts, I have used Renaissance editions: Giles of Rome, *Expositio supra libros Elenchorum*

Refutations, with a new series of questions dated about 1280.[13] There are two commentaries on the *Categories*, one by Peter of Auvergne[14] and one by an anonymous author, Anonymus Matritensis.[15] From about 1280 we have John of Dacia, who included some material probably drawn from earlier questions on the *Sophistical Refutations* in his *Summa Grammatica*.[16] Simon of Faversham wrote on both the *Categories* and the *Sophistical Refutations* around 1280.[17] Around 1295 we have the commentaries on the *Categories* and the *Sophistical Refutations* by the young Duns Scotus.[18] Finally I shall make some references to the commentaries on the same works by Radulphus Brito, dating from around 1300.[19]

SIGNIFICATION AND IMPOSITION

In this section I shall attempt to lay out the basic semantic theory found in the texts I have mentioned above and in Aquinas himself. The central semantic notion was *significare*, with its correlates *significatio*, *significatum*, and *res significata*.[20] The first thing to notice is that *significare* should not be translated as 'to mean' and *significatio* should not be translated as 'meaning'. As Paul Spade has emphasized,

(Venice, 1500); Giles of Rome, *Expositio in Artem Veterem* (Venice, 1507), reprint ed. (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1968).

13. See CPDMA 7.

14. Robert Andrews, "Petrus de Alvernia, *Quaestiones super Praedicamentis*: An Edition," *CIMAGL* 55 (1987): 3–84.

15. Robert Andrews, "Anonymus Matritensis, *Quaestiones super librum Praedicamentorum*: An Edition," *CIMAGL* 56 (1988): 117–192.

16. See note 4, above.

17. For the *Categories* commentary, see *Quaestiones super libro Praedicamentorum*, in *Magistri Simonis Anglici sive de Faverisham Opera Omnia* 1: *Opera Logica*, edited by Pasquale Mazzarella (Padua: CEDAM, 1957). For the questions on the *Sophistical Refutations*, see note 10, above.

18. John Duns Scotus, *In librum Praedicamentorum quaestiones*, in *Opera omnia* 1 (Paris: Vivès, 1891); *In libros Elenchorum quaestiones*, in *Opera omnia* 2 (Paris: Vivès, 1891).

19. Radulphus Brito, *Questiones super Arte Veteri* (no place, no date) (copy in the Bibliothèque Mazarine, Paris). For a list of published extracts from his commentary on the *Sophistical Refutations*, see Ebbesen, "The Way Fallacies Were Treated in Scholastic Logic," p. 130.

20. We also meet the phrase *ratio significandi*, which is roughly a word's capacity for signifying. See, e.g., CPDMA 7, p. 122; Martin of Dacia, *In Praed.*, p. 163; John of Dacia, p. 374. Aquinas uses the notion in his *Sentences*-commentary: see, e.g., *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.18.1.2 ad 4, 1.22.1.3 ad 2.

"signification is a psychologico-causal property of terms."[21] In the texts we shall be considering the most usual definition is that "to signify is to establish an understanding" ("significare est intellectum constituere").[22] Yet signification is also closely associated with being a sign, that is, with representing or making known something beyond itself.[23] In this context, another crucial text is from earlier in *On Interpretation*: "Spoken words are signs of concepts" (or, "Sunt ergo ea quae sunt in voce earum quae sunt in anima passionum notae," as the normal medieval translation has it.)[24] It was this phrase that led to the great debate about whether words signified concepts or things.[25] In order to understand this debate it is necessary to realize that everyone agreed on two things. First, spoken words will have signification only

21. Paul Vincent Spade, "The Semantics of Terms," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 188.

22. Based on Aristotle *On Interpretation* 16b19–21, as in AL 2/1–2: *De Interpretatione vel Periermenias*, edited by Lorenzo Minio-Paluello and Gérard Verbeke (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 5. See also Jacqueline Hamesse, *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis: Un florilège médiéval: Etude historique et édition critique*, PM 17 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, and Paris: Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1974), p. 305, no. 6. I intend to locate quotations from Aristotle in *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis* wherever possible, since this florilegium (which dates from between 22 November 1267 and the year 1325) is an extremely useful guide to the commonplace tags picked up and used by almost all logical writers. This particular tag is found, e.g., in CPDMA 7, p. 279; Simon of Faversham, *Quaestiones super libro Perihermeneias*, ed. Mazzarella, p. 154; Duns Scotus, *In Praed.*, p. 456A.

23. See, e.g., *Dialectica Monacensis*, edited in L. M. de Rijk, *Logica Modernorum* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1962–1967) 2/2:463; Lambert of Auxerre, pp. 205–206. This passage has been translated in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts* 1: *Logic and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 104–105. This is the sense of the phrase that became most prominent in later medieval logic. See E. J. Ashworth, "Jacobus Naveros (fl. ca. 1533) on the Question: 'Do Spoken Words Signify Concepts or Things?'" in *Logos and Pragma: Essays on the Philosophy of Language in Honour of Professor Gabriel Nuchelmans*, edited by L. M. de Rijk and H. A. G. Braakhuis, Artistarium Supplementa 3 (Nijmegen: Ingenium Publishers, 1987), p. 190.

24. Aristotle *On Interpretation* 16a3–4, in AL 2/1–2:5; *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis*, p. 304, no. 1. See Aquinas, *Summa theol.* 1.13.1: "secundum Philosophum, voces sunt signa intellectuum, et intellectus sunt rerum similitudines"; Giles of Rome, *In SE*, f. 10vb: "voces sunt signa eorum conceptuum qui sunt in anima."

25. For some references and discussion, see E. J. Ashworth, "Jacobus Naveros," pp. 189–214.

if they are related to a mental word or concept, whether this relation-ship is described as one of signification or, as Ockham preferred, subordination. Second, spoken words, with the obvious exception of syncategorematic terms such as 'not' and of words picking out fictional or mental entities such as 'chimera' and 'concept', typically refer to things in the external world. The main question was how these rela-tionships were to be interpreted and ordered. Was one primary? If so, which? For Aquinas, the signification of concepts was immediate and the signification of external objects mediate.[26] There is no time to pursue this debate here, but it is worth noting that it had an effect on the discussion of equivocation. In Duns Scotus, for instance, we find the question raised whether the dual signification of things and con-cepts counted as equivocation.[27]

An important corollary of the three-termed relationship between words, concepts, and things is that while concepts were said to have natural signification, in the sense of being the same at least for all with the same experiences, spoken words were said to have purely conven-tional signification, which they received through an act of imposition. The notion of imposition will be important for subsequent discussion because it was supposed to be a complete endowment of a word not only with a primary signification but also—for many thirteenth-century logicians—with a complete set of secondary significations, consignifications, and grammatical *modi significandi*. The effect of such a doctrine was to downplay the importance of use and of context and to make the approach to sentence meaning remarkably inflexible.[28] It also meant that analogy and equivocation were discussed as if they

26. Aquinas, *Sent. Peri hermeneias*, 1.2, in *Opera Omnia* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, and Paris, J. Vrin, 1989), T.I•/1, p.11: "ideo necesse fuit Aristotili dicere quod uoces significant intellectus conceptiones inmediate, et eis mediantibus res." Compare Simon of Faversham, *In Periherm.* 5: " . . . queritur utrum voces significent res extra animam existentes vel passiones rerum," pp. 154–155; CPDMA 7, 811: "Consequenter quaeritur utrum possibile sit vocem rem veram significare," pp. 278–280.

27. John Duns Scotus, *In duos libros Perihermenias quaestiones*, in *Opera Omnia* 1:541B–542A. (This is the first of his two commentaries on *On Interpretation*.) He denied the point, because only one act of signifying was involved. But see Ashworth, "Jacobus Naveros," p. 199, for more discussion.

28. See Sten Ebbesen, "The Dead Man Is Alive," *Synthese* 40 (1979): 47, 51–52. This inflexibility was perhaps one of the reasons that the fourteenth century reverted to a focus on supposition theory, which was very much concerned with context.

were properties of single terms, with correspondingly adverse effects on the development of a fully satisfactory philosophy of language.[29]

Imposition crops up in two places in the texts I am considering. One has to do with denominative terms.[30] Why do logicians say that concrete accidental terms (such as 'just') come from abstract terms, whereas grammarians say the reverse? Lambert of Auxerre and Roger Bacon both suggested that grammarians were more concerned with what was seen and felt, whereas logicians were a more subtle group and gave priority to the truly simple (i.e., abstract properties) over what was composite.[31] In order to argue that the mode of understanding whereby something is placed in a category is prior (so that the logicians were in the right), Martin of Dacia appealed to the common view that abstract terms such as *albedo* could be placed in a category whereas *album* could not.[32] This is hardly an empirical approach to the question of how words achieve signification, and the reliance on metaphysical principles such as the priority of the simple is noteworthy.

The second problem of imposition related to current issues has to do with etymology. A name may be imposed or endowed with signification because of what one might be tempted to regard as some relationship between its sound and the sounds of words already associated with the thing being named. Thus Isidore of Seville's claim that a 'stone' (*lapis*) is 'what hurts the foot' ("quod laedat pedem")[33] was picked up by Peter of Spain, Lambert of Auxerre,[34] and Martin of Dacia.[35] However, Aquinas's handling of the example seems to show

29. See James F. Ross, *Understanding Analogy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

30. Denominative terms, or concrete accidental terms, are Aristotle's paronyms: see *Categories* 1a13–15.

31. Lambert of Auxerre, *Logica*, p. 66. Roger Bacon, *Summulae* 1, p. 191.

32. Martin of Dacia, *In Praed.*, p. 168. For the category problem (discussed in terms of genus), see the discussion and references in Robert Andrews, "Denomination in Peter of Auvergne," in *Meaning and Inference in Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Norman Kretzmann (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), p. 94. See also Bacon *Summulae* 1, p. 185.

33. Isidore, *Etymologiarvm sive originvm libri XX*, edited by W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), vol. 2, 16.3.1.

34. Peter of Spain, *Tractatus*, p. 62; Lambert of Auxerre, *Logica*, p. 8. Lambert also used Isidore, 11.1.5: "Nam proprie homo ab humo."

35. Martin of Dacia, *Modi significandi*, in *Opera*, pp. 36–37. He said that *lapis* was

that the actual property of foot-hurting is more important than any relationship of sounds.

In his discussion of imposition, Aquinas used a traditional distinction between that in virtue of which a name was imposed ("id a quo imponitur") and that which the name was imposed to signify ("id ad quod significandum nomen imponitur").[36] In his *Sentences*-commentary, he tied this distinction to Priscian's claim that a name signifies substance with quality.[37] He explained that the definition had nothing to do with logical categories, but rather with the grammarians' *modi significandi* (see below). Quality concerns what the name is imposed from, i.e., the form which as it were produces knowledge of the thing in question. Substance concerns what the name is imposed to signify, i.e., the thing viewed as subsistent, even if it is not in fact capable of subsisting. In the case of *albedo*, that from which the name is taken and that which the name is imposed to signify are identical, but in the case of *homo* the two are distinct. Later in the *Sentences*-commentary, he used the notion of supposition and said that a name properly speaking signifies the form or quality from which it was imposed and supposits for that on which it was imposed (*cui imponitur*).[38] Similarly in the *Summa theologiae* he remarked that for a name to signify substance with quality was for it to signify a *suppositum* with a nature or determinate form in which it subsists.[39] Thus it looks as if what the name is taken from gives the *significatum*, and what a name is imposed to signify gives the *suppositum*. This account needs consider-

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masculine because it is connected with *laedens pedem*, which is understood *per modum agentis*. *Petra* is feminine because it is connected with the passive *pede trita*.

36. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.22.1.1 ad 3, 3.6.1.3; *Summa theol.* 1.13.8. The distinction, and the connection with Priscian, go back to the twelfth century. See Ebbesen, "Concrete Accidental Terms: Late Thirteenth-Century Debates about Problems Relating to Such Terms as *Album*," in *Meaning and Inference*, p. 142.

37. See passages cited in previous note and also *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.9.1.2. For Priscian, see *Institutionum grammaticarum libri XVIII*, in *Grammatici Latini*, edited by Heinrich Keil (Leipzig: Teubner, 1855), reprint ed. (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 1981), 2:55: "Proprium est nominis substantiam et qualitatem significare."

38. *Scriptum super Sent.* 3.6.1.3.

39. *Summa theol.* 1.13.1 ad 3.

able modification, however, in the light both of what Aquinas says about abstract and concrete nouns and of his handling of the *lapis* case and others similar to it.

In the first place, Aquinas is frequently concerned, in the *Sentences*-commentary as in later writings, to remove the element of subsistence or existence as a subject from some names. Certainly if one is thinking of a noun as opposed to a verb, it signifies a thing able to be understood as existing *per se* or as a subject;[40] but if one considers abstract nouns as opposed to concrete nouns, there is a sharp distinction. An abstract noun signifies something simple that can exist only as characterizing another thing, whereas a concrete noun signifies something composite and subsistent.[41] It is precisely because of these *modi significandi* that we have so much difficulty in naming God, who is simple and subsistent at one and the same time. If we apply abstract terms to God, the *modus significandi* of subsistence is lost and the inappropriate *modus significandi* of dependence is added. If we apply concrete terms, the *modus significandi* of simplicity is lost and the inappropriate *modus significandi* of composition is added.[42] In the *Summa theologiae* this distinction between abstract and concrete terms is further explained, not in terms of imposition, but in terms of supposition theory. A concrete term such as *homo* has *modi significandi* such that while signifying a form it supposits for a person, at least in the absence of a special context such as "homo est species." Abstract terms have a *modus significandi* such that they do not supposit for individuals. Thus *deus* and *deitas*, while referring to the same reality, function differently with respect to supposition.[43]

40. *Sent. Peri herm.* 1.5, p. 29.

41. This account has to be modified for adjectives, which strictly speaking signify only a form. See *Scriptum super Sent.* 3.5.3.3: "*substantiva* enim significant non tantum formam, sed etiam suppositum formae. . . . *adjectiva* autem significant tantum formam" (Mandonnet-Moos, 3:210). However, concrete accidental terms, including adjectives, do make known their subject in some way. See *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.18.1.2 ad 3: "hoc nomen 'donum' vel 'datum' . . . dat intelligere rem quamdam quae datur; quamvis forte non sicut partem significationis nominis, quia subjectum non includitur in significatione nominis significantis accidens concretive, ut dicit Commentator" (Mandonnet-Moos, 1:440).

42. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.33.1.2; *Summa theol.* 1.13.1 ad 2.

43. *Summa theol.* 1.39.4 corpus and ad 3, 1.39.5. In fact *deus*, unlike *homo*, can supposit for an essence in the presence of an active verb such as *creat*, and, depending

In the second place, as his handling of the *lapis* example shows, Aquinas really wants to use the distinction between that from which a name is imposed and that which it is imposed to signify in order to accommodate our epistemological situation. In particular, he wants to argue that though the names of God are taken from created things, they can nevertheless signify God himself. In the *Summa theologiae* Aquinas notes once more that in some cases what a name is taken from and what it is intended to signify are the same; he once more uses *albedo* as an example, along with heat and cold. We know these directly as properties of things, and because we perceive these properties, we impose the words 'heat', 'cold', and 'whiteness' to signify them.[44] Here there is no harm done if we identify the *significatum* of a name with what it is taken from. Where substances are concerned, however, we know them, at least at first, only indirectly through their properties and effects. Thus, we first know stones through their propensity to hurt feet; but we nevertheless impose the name *lapis* to signify the true nature of stone.[45] It would be a mistake to think of foot-hurting as being essential to stones, or to suppose that the word 'stone' signified any object with the propensity to hurt feet. He suggests that we can indeed come to know the quiddity of a stone, but also that this is not essential to signification. Even though we cannot know God's quiddity, at least in this life, the pattern of imposition remains the same: we take a divine name from effects and impose it to signify the essence of the object named. In these cases, what the name is taken from is not the *significatum*, and the qualities which lead to imposition need not enter into the essence of the thing named.

Aquinas also uses the distinction in order to argue that some names are more appropriate than others in certain respects. His example, drawn from religious language, is that of two names of God: *Qui est* (He who is) and *Deus*. If one considers that from which these names are imposed, 'He who is' is the most appropriate name, since it is drawn from *esse*. If one considers that which names are imposed to signify, 'God' is the most appropriate name, since it is imposed in

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on context, it can also supposit for just one or just two or all three persons of the Trinity. Thus *deus* differs from other members of the same word-class.

44. *Summa theol.* 1.13.8.

45. *Summa theol.* 1.13.8 corpus and ad 2, 1.13.2 ad 2, 1.59.1 ad 2. For another example, that of *vita*, see 1.18.2.

order to signify the divine nature.[46] Aquinas made considerable use of
this broader distinction between what a name is imposed from and
that which it is imposed to signify in his account of 'before and
afterwards' in the functioning of analogous names.

SIGNIFICATUM AND RES SIGNIFICATA

The threefold relationship of word, concept, and exter-
nal thing referred to in the previous section has to be kept somewhat
separate from the question of the *significatum* of a word.[47] Here there
are two quotations from Aristotle, both from *Metaphysics* 4, that are of
particular relevance. One is a claim made in the discussion of whether
an equivocal word could really have many significates: "A term which
does not signify one thing signifies nothing" ("⟨terminus⟩ Qui non
unum significat, nihil significat").[48] The other key text linked the
significatum with definition: "The analysis which a term signifies is the
definition" ("Ratio quam significat nomen est definitio").[49] These two
tags indicated that just one object would count as a *significatum*, and
that it would be an intelligible object. This was not a new idea, for in
early sources we find the *significatum* identified with "the form or
analysis by virtue of which ⟨a name⟩ is imposed" ("forma sive ratio a
qua imponitur").[50] William of Sherwood said explicitly that significa-
tion is the presentation of some form to the intellect,[51] and in both

46. *Summa theol.* 1.13.11 ad 1.

47. Rosier points out that it also has to be kept distinct from the triad *modi
intelligendi, modi essendi,* and *modi significandi.* See Irène Rosier, *La grammaire spécula-
tive des Modistes* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1983), p. 212, n. 88. Buers-
meyer, "Aquinas on the *Modi Significandi,*" p. 73, runs the triads together.

48. *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis,* p. 123, no. 100; Aristotle *Metaphysics* 4.4.1006b7. I
have added the word *terminus* which appears in Martin of Dacia, *In Praed.,* p. 159.
The answer to the problem was that a word had to have at least one significate, but
that others were not ruled out. See Martin of Dacia, *In Praed.,* pp. 159–161; CPDMA
7, pp. 73, 80; Simon of Faversham, *In SE,* pp. 57, 59.

49. *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis,* p. 124, no. 116, with an addition by Aquinas;
Aristotle *Metaphysics* 4.7.1012a24–25. The phrase is frequently cited by Aquinas: see,
e.g., *Summa theol.* 1.13.1, 1.13.4, 1.13.8 ad 2.

50. Chenu, "Grammaire et théologie," p. 25. The only reference is to Albert the
Great, but Chenu claims that the view is found in twelfth-century logicians.

51. William of Sherwood, p. 265: "Est igitur *significatio* praesentatio alicuius for-
mae ad intellectum."

Aquinas and Duns Scotus we find the claim that 'man' signifies human nature.[52] The interpretation of this claim, however, depended on the attitude towards common natures.

Avicenna's notion of common natures as neither universal nor particular, neither existent nor nonexistent, had its part to play.[53] This is particularly clear in Simon of Faversham's commentary on *On Interpretation*, in which he says that words do not signify things according to the characteristic (*ratio*) whereby they exist outside the mind, or according to the characteristic whereby they exist in the mind, but rather in themselves (*absolute*). He then linked this with the second quotation from *Metaphysics* 4, saying that a definition signifies a thing in itself, apart from any accident ("diffinicio significat rem quantum ad id quod est simpliciter et absolute, circumscribendo quodlibet accidens"). As a result, words did not lose their signification when external objects perished.[54] Aquinas did not wish to give common natures any intermediate status involving quasi-existence, so for him the solution lay in the notion of the *verbum mentale* or *conceptio* which is a mental object but which is distinct from the *species intelligibilis*.[55] This inner conception is identified with the definition formed when the mind understands a simple object, or with the proposition formed when the mind compounds and divides. Thus the analysis signified by a name is the intellect's understanding of the thing signified by the name ("Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen").[56]

Whether one speaks of an Avicennian common nature or of Thomas's inner word, there is a tension here between two approaches to signification. One of them focuses on the universal nature as captured by a definition, while the other focuses on the nature in actual individuals. In the texts I am concerned with, this tension is illustrated by the relation between *significatum* and *res significata*. On some

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52. Aquinas, *Sent. Peri herm.*, 1.2, p. 11: "significat enim hoc nomen 'homo' naturam humanam in abstractione a singularibus"; Duns Scotus, *In Praed.*, p. 16A: "homo significat naturam humanam."

53. See Sten Ebbesen, "Concrete Accidental Terms: Late Thirteenth-Century Debates about Problems Relating to Such Terms as *Album*," in *Meaning and Inference*, p. 114.

54. Simon of Faversham, *In Periherm.*, p. 155. Compare CPDMA 7, p. 279.

55. *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura* 1.1 n.25; *De veritate* 4.2; *De potentia* 8.1.

56. *Summa theol.* 1.13.4; compare 1.5.2.

views the two are identical: "The significate is the very thing signified" ("significatum est ipsa res significata").[57] Martin of Dacia is more ambiguous. He says that the external thing, the understood thing, and the signified thing are identical ("res extra, intellecta et significata sunt una et eadem res"),[58] but he also says that the significate is nothing other than the concept represented by the utterance ("significatum speciale nihil aliud est quam intellectum per vocem repraesentatum").[59]

Aquinas recognizes that there is an ambiguity. In *De veritate* he remarks that what is understood can be either the thing itself or the intellect's conception, just as what is said can be either the thing expressed by the word or the word (*verbum*).[60] If one considers the way in which he uses the term *significatum*, it looks as if the *significatum* of a name is the analysis (*ratio*) that is identified with the intellect's conception. Thus in *Summa theologiae* he speaks of the imperfect modes that are included in the *significatum* of such names as *lapis*, rendering them inapt to be used of God unless metaphorically.[61] On the other hand, *res significata* is used by him to pick out natures and properties as externally exemplified. His explanations of how it is that transcendental terms differ[62] and how it is that words used of God are not synonymous even though God's nature is absolutely simple[63] de-

57. CPDMA 7, p. 278, in the statement of opposing views. Compare Simon of Faversham (on the view of "some people"), *In SE*, p. 56.

58. Martin of Dacia, *Modi significandi*, p. 6.

59. Martin of Dacia, *Modi significandi*, p. 8. The *significatum speciale* is the significate of a word, as opposed to the *significatum generale*, which characterizes a class of words. See Michael A. Covington, *Syntactic Theory in the High Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 26. Lambert of Auxerre said that grammarians were concerned with the latter, logicians with the former (*Logica*, p. 8).

60. *De veritate* 4.2 ad 3.

61. *Summa theol.* 1.13.3 ad 1 and ad 3. Cf. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.22.1.2 ad 2: "possumus nomen imponere ipsi perfectioni absolute, non concernendo aliquem modum significandi in ipso significato, quod est quasi objectum intellectus." Notice that we have here a usage of *modus significandi* that suggests that it can be mixed in with the *significatum*.

62. *De veritate* 1.1. That we are not to take *ens*, *verum*, *unum*, and *bonum* as merely having the same extension in terms of actual individuals is born out by the use of *in* in such remarks as, "etsi ens, verum, unum et bonum magis uniantur in Deo quam in rebus creatis, non tamen oportet, ex quo in Deo ratione distinguuntur, quod in rebus creatis distinguantur etiam realiter" (ad 5 sc).

63. *Summa theol.* 1.13.4.

pend on a distinction between what the name signifies in the sense of *significatum* or *ratio* and what the name signifies in the sense of external object (where a nature can be regarded as externally existent in individuals). To quote a sentence already cited: "The analysis that the name signifies is the intellect's conception of the thing signified by the name" ("Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen").[64] Indeed, it is only by taking the *res significata* to be externally existent that one can make sense of Aquinas's claim that when the word 'wise' is used of God "it leaves the thing signified as incomprehended, and as exceeding the signification of the name" ("relinquit rem significatam ut incomprehensam, et excedentem nominis significationem").[65] The same passage reminds us that the thing signified is usually a perfection or nature rather than the individual having that nature,[66] though of course in the case of God no real distinction can be made between the two. Just as *significatum* and *res significata* have to be kept distinct, so *suppositum* and *res significata* have to be kept distinct. This is why the discussion of the *res significata* has to be separated from the controversy concerning whether words signify concepts or things. The latter focused on the contrast between concepts and external individuals, the things of which such predicates as 'is running' were to be verified, rather than on the distinction between concepts and externally existent natures.

CONSIGNIFICATION AND MODES OF SIGNIFYING

We must now turn to the definition of consignification and *modi significandi*. Here we are concerned with secondary signification, though 'secondary' in this context should be distinguished (a) from the kind of secondary signification that an equivocal term such

64. *Summa theol.* 1.13.4.

65. *Summa theol.* 1.13.5, cited in the translation by the Dominican fathers.

66. Compare *Summa theol.* 1.39.5: "Nam hoc nomen *Deus*, quia significat divinam essentiam ut in habente, ex modo suae significationis naturaliter habet quod possit supponere pro persona." However, proper names signify individuals rather than natures, as in *Summa theol.* 1.13.9: "Si vero esset aliquod nomen impositum ad significandum Deum non ex parte naturae, sed ex parte suppositi, secundum quod consideratur ut hoc aliquid, illud nomen esset omnibus modis incommunicabile: sicut forte est nomen Tetragrammaton apud Hebraeos."

as 'man' can have when it signifies a painted man secondarily, (b) from the kind of secondary signification that a denominative term such as 'white' can be said to have when it signifies the subject of whiteness secondarily, and (c) from the kind of secondary signification that a term has in signifying an external thing as opposed to a concept (when this was said to be signified primarily).[67] The terms *consignificatio* and *consignificativus* were used in three contexts, each having to do with a type of word. Purely syncategorematic terms were called consignificative because they signified only in conjunction with other terms.[68] Second, following *On Interpretation*, the verb was said to consignify time.[69] Third, and this is the sense with which I am concerned here, consignification had to do with *modi significandi*. For a term to have *consignificatio* was for it to have *consignificata* or *modi significandi*, where these two notions were used interchangeably.[70]

There is a strong temptation to associate the notion of *modi significandi* with the *Modistae*, or speculative grammarians, whose work began in the 1240s and is captured in a series of important texts written from about 1270 on.[71] The notion that words have *modi significandi* has its roots in Boethius,[72] however, and was already widely used in the twelfth century in philosophical and theological, as well as gram-

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67. The vocabulary used was variable. The phrase *per prius et posterius* was most often used in relation to (a), but *significare ex consequenti* could be used both of (a) and of (b). See, respectively, Giles of Rome, *In SE*, f. 10rb, and Peter of Auvergne, p. 20.

68. See, e.g., *Dialectica Monacensis*, p. 605. Compare William of Sherwood, *Introductiones*, p. 224: "omnes partes indeclinabiles . . . non significant proprie, sed consignificant, id est cum alio significant." Rosier, *La grammaire spéculative*, p. 68, says that this is the primary usage of the term, i.e., to describe the opposition between noun, verb, and other parts of speech.

69. Aristotle *On Interpretation* 16b6, as in AL 2/1–2, p. 7: "Verbum autem est quod consignificat tempus."

70. See John of Dacia, pp. 370–371; Duns Scotus, *In SE*, p. 27A. Compare CPDMA 7, p. 108. For a quotation from Simon of Faversham's commentary on Peter of Spain, see L. M. de Rijk, "On the Genuine Text of Peter of Spain's *Summule logicales*, 2: Simon of Faversham (d. 1306) as a Commentator of the Tracts I–V of the *Summule*," *Vivarium* 6 (1968): 85. Simon wrote, "Nota differentiam inter *significare* et *consignificare*. Significare enim ex parte significati attenditur, consignificare ex parte modi significandi et non ex parte significati. Et ideo ut gramaticus dicit *modum significandi*, ita loycus dicit *consignificare*."

71. For excellent recent discussions of speculative grammar, see Rosier, *La grammaire spéculative*; and Covington, *Syntactic Theory*.

72. Charles Thurot, *Extraits de divers manuscrits latins pour servir à l'histoire des*

matical, writings. For our purposes it is, initially at least, the grammatical uses that are most important,[73] but we cannot overlook the relationship between grammar and ontology. As Covington writes, "In fully developed modistic theory, all modes of signifying are held to be, in one way or another, representations of the properties of real-world objects: that is, all *modi significandi* are *rationes consignificandi*. Tense 'consignifies' time; the singular and plural in grammar are representations of singularity and plurality of real objects; and the noun-verb distinction mirrors the distinction between substance and process in the real world."[74]

In order to get a better understanding of the issues involved we need to distinguish between three main groups of *modi significandi*. First, there are those, such as gender and case, which were called accidental modes.[75] The word *episcopi* will be important here, since its diversity of *modi significandi* in the sense of case is what gives rise to equivocation. In one standard example—"The bishops [*episcopi*] are priests, these asses are the bishop's [*episcopi*]; therefore these asses are priests"[76]—*episcopi* can be either genitive singular or nominative plural. In some sources, the *modi significandi* were spoken of as primarily belonging to this group.[77] Accidental modes also included time, as is shown through discussion of *laborans* as it appears in another standard paralogism: "Whoever was being cured is healthy, the sufferer [*labo-*

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doctrines grammaticales au moyen âge (Paris, 1869), reprint ed. (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964), cites two relevant passages from Boethius, p. 150, n. 2.

73. For a useful list of questions associated with philosophical grammar and thought to be answered by the doctrine of *modi significandi*, see Covington, p. 25.

74. Covington, p. 28. Of course, as Rosier points out (*La grammaire spéculative*, pp. 58–62), authors were aware that there was no necessary isomorphism between the *modi significandi* and the ways in which an object actually existed.

75. On accidental modes see Covington, p. 29; Rosier, *La grammaire spéculative*, pp. 96, 101–104.

76. William of Sherwood, trans. Kretzmann, p. 136. As Kretzmann points out (n. 23), only the spoken version has the intended effect in English.

77. The *Summe Metenses* said that the *modi significandi* of a word are those which order it towards construction and embrace case, gender, number, time, and person: see *Summe Metenses*, ed. De Rijk, *Logica Modernorum* 2/1:475–476. Compare Lambert of Auxerre on *consignificare*, p. 9: "Dicitur autem ⟨nomen⟩ consignificare illud quod ei accidit ultra principale significatum ut 'homo' consignificat nominativum casum et numerum singularem, et alia que sibi accidunt."

rans] was being cured; therefore the sufferer is healthy."[78] Here the consignification of time is at issue because *laborans* can signify a present sufferer or one who suffered in the past. An important distinction was often made between the two examples, however. Some accidental modes, such as time, were said to be absolute and hence unaffected by context; others, notably case, were respective or relational and could be affected by sentential context.[79]

Second, there are the so-called essential *modi significandi* such as being a noun, verb, or adjective, which were thought to have important implications for the word-thing relationship.[80] For instance, one could speak of a noun as having the mode of signifying an independent object, whereas an adjective has the mode of signifying something dependent and inherent.[81] Peter of Spain had already objected to this way of talking. He argued that *significatio* could not be described as substantive or adjectival, since *adiectivatio* and *substantivatio* were modes of the things signified and not of signification. Instead, he advocated the use of the adverbs *substantive* and *adiective*.[82]

Peter of Spain also discussed what I shall consider a third approach to *modi significandi* since it seems to be independent of word-inflection and word-class.[83] He began with the definition, "Equivocation is when different analyses of things are simply united in the same name" ("equivocatio est cum diverse rerum rationes in eodem simpliciter nomine uniuntur"). Peter held that *res* could here include the modes and relations of things, and that modes included, not just the *modus consignificandi* whereby a word signifies its own accidents (i.e., its own grammatical features), but also the *modus significandi* whereby the one

78. William of Sherwood, trans. Kretzmann, p. 136. The example comes from Aristotle *Sophistical Refutations* 166a1–6.

79. See Covington, pp. 29–30; Rosier, *La grammaire spéculative*, pp. 96, 102–103. Compare Peter of Spain, pp. 114–115, where he refers to case as an *accidens respectivum*, and also speaks of *accidentia absoluta*, such as time. See also CPDMA 7, pp. 322–323; Duns Scotus, *In SE*, pp. 26A–27A.

80. On essential modes, see Covington, p. 29; Rosier, *La grammaire spéculative*, pp. 94–96.

81. See, e.g., Boethius of Dacia, pp. 86–95; Anonymus Matritensis, p. 126; Simon of Faversham, *In SE*, pp. 63, 119; CPDMA 7, p. 121.

82. Peter of Spain, p. 80.

83. Peter of Spain, pp. 98–99. But compare p. 105, where he writes of the third type of equivocation that it arises "a parte consignificationis, in qua attenditur diversitas non rerum significatarum, sed modorum significandi."

health signified by 'healthy' is signified in various modes. Thus 'healthy' said of an animal signifies health as in a subject; said of urine it signifies a sign of health; said of food it signifies a cause of health; said of diet it signifies a conserver of health; and said of a potion it signifies something preparative of health. The example is of course absolutely standard,[84] but Peter's focus on things is doubly instructive. In one way it is instructive because it points us to a distinction that some later Modistae felt impelled to make, that between modi significandi activi, which are properties of the word, and modi significandi passivi, "which are the properties of the real-world object that the word consignifies."[85] Peter's focus on things is instructive in a second way because it helps us to get a handle on at least one claim that has been made about the proper interpretation of Aquinas's view of modi significandi (see below).

Aquinas tends to keep the significatio, consignificatio, and modi significandi of a word separate[86] and to use consignificatio for the signification of time. Thus verbs and participles are generally said to consignify time,[87] as do specific words such as datum.[88] He mentions the consignification of gender,[89] but unsurprisingly he is not normally concerned with these more purely grammatical issues. His main use of the notion of modi significandi falls into the second of the two groups I identified. I have already discussed his distinction between concrete and abstract names. He was also concerned with the distinction between substantive names, which signify through the mode of sub-

84. Normally the example is discussed in terms of significata and not of modi significandi. See, e.g., John of Dacia, 2:370. However, Boethius of Dacia provides an exception (pp. 127–128). Using the example of health, he explores the various ways in which one thing can be in another, and argues that they give rise to different modi significandi: "et secundum istos modos essendi in altero sunt diversi modi significandi." Equivocation arises because "plures proprietates et modi essendi designantur per unum modum significandi." Thus sanum looks like a simple adjective, thereby masking the diversity of modes of being involved.

85. Covington, p. 31. This distinction should not be confused with a distinction between activity and passivity as included in the modi significandi of different words. This sense is found in earlier Modistae (e.g., Boethius of Dacia, p. 5) and in Aquinas (e.g., Scriptum super Sent. 1.18.1.2.)

86. See Scriptum super Sent. 1.18.1.2; Summa theol. 1.13.11.

87. Summa theol. 1.13.1 ad 3.

88. Scriptum super Sent. 1.18.1.2.

89. Summa theol. 1.31.2 ob. 4.

stance (*per modum substantiae*), and adjectival names, which signify through the mode of accident (*per modum accidentis*), where an accident both inheres in a subject and derives its unity from it.[90] For instance, although 'God' signifies having deity ("Deus significat habentem deitatem"), the *modi significandi* of 'God' and 'having deity' are different, since 'God' signifies *substantive* and 'having deity' signifies *adiective*.[91] Note that Aquinas is using the adverbial locutions recommended earlier by Peter of Spain.

There are also places where Aquinas seems to use the notion of *modus significandi* without tying it very closely to the notion of word-class. In the *Sentences*-commentary, in his discussion of the difference between *donum* (gift) and *datum* (given),[92] he says that these words differ in *significatio*, in *consignificatio* (because *datum* as a participle consignifies time), and in *modi significandi*, because *datum* imports actual giving (*dationem in actu*) whereas *donum* imports aptitude for giving (*aptitudinem ad dandum*). It is not clear how these modes could be related to the difference between a name and a participle, even though Aquinas has taken the trouble to point out that two different word-classes are involved. In the *Summa theologiae*'s discussion of *donum*, *modi significandi* are not mentioned, though Aquinas once more interprets *donum* in terms of aptitude.[93] Also in the *Summa theologiae* he says that with one exception any name determines "some mode of the substance of a thing" ("aliquis modus substantiae rei"), the exception being the name *Qui est*, which is so universal that it does not determine any mode of being.[94] These remarks seem to be linked to *modi significandi*. Aquinas states that *Qui est* is suitable as a name for God because of its *significatio*, its *modus significandi*, and its *modus consignificandi*. Of the three points he makes in the article's corpus, the first is explicitly related to signification, and the third to consignification, which leaves the second, about universality, for *modi significandi*. Once again it is not clear whether we are dealing with word-class or

90. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.9.1.2 corpus and ad 4; compare *Summa theol.* 1.39.3. Incidentally, in ad 2 of the latter passage, Aquinas notes that different languages have different ways of pluralizing and cites Greek and Hebrew.

91. *Summa theol.* 1.39.3 ad 1.

92. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.18.1.2.

93. *Summa theol.* 1.38.1–2. In 1.38.1 he writes, "in nomen *doni* importatur aptitudo ad hoc quod donetur."

94. *Summa theol.* 1.13.11.

with an extended notion of *modi significandi* that is independent of word-class. The point here may simply be that any word-class less universal in its scope will have *modi significandi* that are inappropriate when used of God.

In his discussion of words that may be used both of God and creatures, Aquinas insists that a distinction has to be made between the *res significata* and the *modus significandi*.[95] He first makes a careful distinction between the *modus significandi* that is "given to be understood by the name as a consequent" ("qui datur ex consequenti intelligi per nomen")[96] and a mode of participation that may be included in the *significatum*. Some words such as 'wise' and 'good' are imposed to signify a perfection *simpliciter*, and others are imposed to signify "a perfection received according to some mode of participating." Thus 'sense' signifies "cognition through that mode by which it is received materially according to a power conjoined to an organ," and 'lion' signifies a corporeal form according to a determinate mode of participating in life. Such words can be used only metaphorically of God and hence do not pose any particular problem.[97] It is those words intended to signify an unqualified perfection that have to be considered further. Because words are imposed by us on the basis of our knowledge of creatures, any word inevitably has a creaturely mode of signifying. In *Summa contra gentiles*, Aquinas explains this by explicit reference to concrete and abstract terms: the words we apply to individuals signify them as composites with separable properties, and none of this is applicable to God.[98] In *De potentia* he says that we understand *esse* as inherent and concreated (*per modum concreationis*) so that we have to transcend the *modus significandi* when we speak of God as subsistent *esse*.[99] More often, he speaks of our having to deny the creaturely *modi significandi* when we apply words to God.[100] He links these remarks with an insistence that *modi significandi* are related to *modi essendi* not as the latter are in things but only as they are under-

95. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.22.1.2; *Summa theol.* 1.13.3.

96. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.22.1.2 ad 3.

97. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.22.1.2 ad 4; *De veritate* 2.11; *Summa contra gentiles* 1.30; *Summa theol.* 1.13.3 ad 1 and ad 3.

98. *Summa contra gentiles* 1.30.

99. *De potentia* 7.2 ad 7.

100. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.22.1.2 ad 1; *De potentia* 7.5 ad 2; *Summa contra gentiles* 1.30.

stood by us,[101] so that there is nothing odd about the *modi significandi* of a word being inappropriate to what is spoken of.

There are three general points to be made about *modi significandi* in relation to analogy and religious language. First, as I show in my companion paper, thirteenth-century logicians did not use the notion in their explanation of analogy as such, but only in their explanation of other types of equivocation. Second, one cannot equate all distinctions between *modi significandi* with the distinction between religious and nonreligious language. As Aquinas's discussions of *deus* in relation to *deitas*, *habens deitatem*, and the name *Qui est* show, *modi significandi* also enable us to make distinctions within religious language. Third, while the distinction between *res significata* and *modi significandi* is central to Aquinas's theory of religious language, it is in no way central to his theory of analogy (insofar as he has a general theory). It plays no role in his explanation of the use of such words as *sanum* and *ens*.

At this point I disagree with Ralph McInerny, who claims that "a name predicated analogically of many has the same *res significata* but different *modi significandi*."[102] He then argues that where the term 'healthy' is concerned, health is the *res significata* and 'subject of . . . ', 'cause of . . . ', and 'sign of . . . ' are different *modi significandi*. Filling in the blanks with 'health' gives us a series of *rationes* that are partly the same and partly different. McInerny bases his account on a brief passage in the *Sentences*-commentary where Aquinas says that an analogous term is divided according to different modes.[103] The modes in question are called *modi praedicandi*, and Aquinas explains that *ens* is divided among the ten categories according to ten *modi praedicandi*, each category having its own mode of predication, but that only two of these modes (substantial and relative) can be used of God. It is certainly true that Aquinas explicitly links these *modi praedicandi* with *modi significandi*, insofar as he is replying to the objection

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101. *Summa theol.* 1.13.9 ad 2.

102. Ralph McInerny, "Can God Be Named by Us?" in *Being and Predication: Thomistic Interpretations* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), pp. 274–275.

103. *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.22.1.3 ad 2. Compare 1.8.4.2 ad 1, where Aquinas says that 'substance' is predicated analogically of God and creatures because of a diverse *modus praedicandi*. He explains that the name 'substance' comes from "standing under" and that it picks out a quiddity different from an object's *esse*.

that God can have only one name (if one thinks of what is signified) or perhaps just two (if we think of the *modi significandi*), but it is not a theme he pursues elsewhere, so far as I know. Moreover, this interpretation is at odds with both Aquinas's actual discussions of the word 'healthy' and the normal interpretation of *modi significandi* in terms of such grammatical features as word-class. On the other hand, McInerny's account fits in very well with what Peter of Spain had to say about the use of the word 'healthy', so it is not alien to at least one thirteenth-century thinker.

PROBLEMS OF USE AND CONTEXT

The doctrines of a word as having, through its *significatio* and *consignificatio*, both a *significatum* and *modi significandi* and as being the subject of voluntary imposition led to a problem that is of particular importance in the context of equivocation and analogy—the relationships to use in terms of speaker intention and in terms of being a grammatical part of a sentence. There were two particular areas of concern. The first, which I shall not discuss here, involved the notion of transferred or extended sense where a word acquires what looks like a second *significatum*, as when 'foot' is said of a mountain, or an accident is called a 'being', or urine is called 'healthy'. Is there a second imposition, or is it the use that produces the new signification, or is the new signification somehow included in the old? The second area of concern had to do with restriction, or the process whereby a given significate or mode of signifying is brought into play. This problem was posed particularly sharply in the case of purely equivocal terms such as *canis*, which can signify a four-footed animal, a marine animal, or a star. If one says "The dog barks," or "The dog swims," or "The dog gives light," has one restricted 'dog' to one *significatum*? If so, how? Similarly, with words such as *amor*, which can be both noun and verb, or *episcopi*, which can have two cases, one can ask whether it is the context or something else that produces the intended *modus significandi*.

We find two quite different approaches to such problems in medieval logic. In supposition theory there is a focus on ways of verification and on context. Type of predicate, tense of verb, and syncategorematic terms all had their part to play in explaining the type and range of reference of a given word in a sentential context. The other approach

tends to characterize the logicians with whom I am currently concerned. It involves the central claim that a word has not only its significates but also its *modi significandi*, before it enters a sentence. What is more, these *modi* cannot be altered by the role the word plays in a sentence. Peter of Spain was an early hard-liner in this respect. He wrote that one who imposes a word to signify such and such a thing, at the same time imposes it to signify such and such a gender and number. Peter excluded case from his remarks, however, since this is indeed given to a word so that it may be ordered in relation to other words.[104]

So far as restriction is concerned, there was general agreement that an equivocal term could actually be used and understood only in one of its senses. Albert the Great explained that a distinction must be made between intentional use and mere utterance. So far as mere utterance was concerned, an equivocal term had more than one significate (by definition), and different hearers—or one person using the term twice—could each think of a different significate. Since only one thing can be understood at a time, however, a word uttered or heard with understanding by one person at one time could signify only one thing. Peter of Auvergne, the anonymous *Auctores*, and Simon of Faversham all concurred in this view.[105] It is a pity none of them considered puns and double entendre, let alone the intention to mislead through using equivocal language, all of which seem to involve some kind of multiple understanding.

What it is that causes the hearer to focus on a single significate or *modus significandi* was the subject of much debate in the last decades of the thirteenth century. The *Auctores* and Simon of Faversham gave the same series of arguments.[106] They drew an initial distinction between mediate and immediate determination. "Canis latrabilis currit" was a case of immediate determination, since the restricting term *latrabilis* is part of the subject phrase, but both "Canis est latrabilis" and "Canis latrat" were cases of mediate determination. Mediate determination was said to have no effect in restricting reference to any particular significate. After all, both significate and *modus significandi*

104. Peter of Spain, *Tractatus*, p. 114. For case, see pp. 108, 114–115.
105. Albert the Great, *In SE*, p. 541A–B; Peter of Auvergne, pp. 14–15; CPDMA 7, pp. 75–76, 81–82, 286–288; Simon of Faversham, *In SE*, pp. 63–66.
106. CPDMA 7, pp. 125–129, 298–301; Simon of Faversham, *In SE*, pp. 73–75.

are essential to a term, at least once it has been imposed, and deter-
mination, which is accidental, cannot alter what is essential. If a term
has three significates, those three significates cannot be removed from
play through mediate determination. Nevertheless, the "usage of au-
thors" (*usus auctorum*) shows that restriction does take place in the
case of immediate determination. The problem is how to account for
this. No *a priori* explanation can be given, since imposition is the
result of arbitrary action. Nor is an appeal to the intention of the
actual user sufficient. There must be something in the literal sense
(*virtus sermonis*) of the words to explain the presence of restriction.
Hence one has to say that it just is the case that purely equivocal terms
are imposed to signify more than one thing when they are taken by
themselves, and that they are also imposed to signify just one thing
in certain sentential contexts, those involving immediate deter-
mination.

The situation with analogous terms was said to be the exact op-
posite. The use of authors shows that analogous terms are so imposed
that taken by themselves they signify just one thing:[107] in the case of
contexts involving immediate determination, they signify their sec-
ondary significate; in the case of contexts involving mediate deter-
mination, they signify one or the other significate in such a way that
the senses have to be distinguished before judgments about truth-value
can be made. Thus *ens* by itself will signify substance; and in the
phrase 'dead man' (*homo mortuus*), *homo* will stand for its secondary
significate, a corpse.[108] Aquinas seems to have agreed with these
points when he remarked in *De veritate* that a term which is said of
more than one thing in a prior and a posterior way can be taken for the
posterior significate by reason of some adjunct. Thus the addition of
'in another' causes 'being' to stand for accident, and the addition of
'book of' to 'life' causes 'life' to stand for created life.[109] In *De veritate*
he implicitly accepts that such words stand for their prior significate
when taken simply, and he does so explicitly in other places.[110]

107. In the common phrase, they stand *pro modo famosiori*: CPDMA 7, pp. 129,
311; Duns Scotus, *In SE*, p. 23B.

108. For this treatment of *homo* as an analogical term, see Ebbesen, "The Dead
Man Is Alive," pp. 43–70.

109. *De veritate* 7.5 ad 3.

110. *Sent. Peri herm.* 1.5, p. 30; *Scriptum super Sent.* 1.9.1.1 ad 2.

Duns Scotus and Radulphus Brito responded to the arguments of earlier logicians with some amazement. Scotus pointed out that if one could explain immediate restriction by appeal to the will of the imposer, then there was no reason why one could not do the same for the case of mediate restriction.[111] He also rejected the view that no further reason could be sought for restriction: one was dealing with the significates of complex phrases, and such cases were always to be explained in terms of the significates of the incomplex terms entering into the complex phrase or sentence. That being said, Scotus claimed that equivocal terms could not be restricted in their reference through immediate determination any more than they could through mediate determination. Reference can of course be restricted, but only when a true common term is involved, as in such phrases as 'some white man'. No equivocal term can be restricted by its sentential context. The context of utterance is another matter, however. The hearer knows that the speaker who uses an equivocal term must intend to refer to just one thing, and by an inferential process, working from the clues provided by the immediate determinants, the hearer can decide what that thing is. Thus the addition of 'Helias' to 'Petrus' does not make 'Petrus' have determinate signification, but it does allow the hearer to become cognizant of the intended reference. Duns Scotus did accept one of the common examples of restriction, agreeing that when *canna*, which in the feminine is a reed pipe and in the masculine the name of a river, is joined to an adjective in the masculine case, it becomes clear that the Roman river and not a reed pipe is the subject of discourse.[112] However, this is to be explained in terms of the way respective or relational *modi significandi*, such as gender, function; it has nothing to do with equivocal terms as such. It is a case of restriction *per accidens* with respect to *canna* taken as equivocal. So far as analogous terms are concerned, given Scotus's earlier arguments, they have to be treated as either purely equivocal or as univocal.[113]

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111. Duns Scotus, *In SE*, pp. 16B–18B. Brito described the view that a term could be imposed in this way as *fuga rationum*. See his *In SE*, as in Ebbesen, "The Dead Man Is Alive," p. 60.

112. John Duns Scotus, *In SE*, pp. 16B, 18B. The example comes from Boethius, as in *Liber de divisione*, in PL 64:890. Compare CPDMA 7, pp. 126, 298; Simon of Faversham, *In SE*, p. 83.

113. Duns Scotus, *In SE*, pp. 23A–25A. For Scotus's rejection of analogous terms,

Radulphus Brito also rejected the arguments found in the *Auctores* and Simon of Faversham.[114] He claimed that a properly analogical term has to be distinguished in terms of its literal sense wherever it is found, and he rejected the rule that it stands for its principal significate unless specially restricted. All it has through imposition is the ability to stand for two significates; imposition does not specify any sentential context in which restriction to one of them alone takes place. Radulphus added, however, that this fact about literal meaning (*virtus sermonis*) does not prevent someone from understanding a given significate to be intended.[115]

While the logicians I have been discussing tended not to use supposition theory to solve problems arising from the use of equivocal and analogical terms, they did consider the issue of whether diverse acceptance was itself a cause of equivocation. It seems that even apparently univocal terms can be used in different ways: "Man is a species," "Man is a noun," and "Man is running" all use 'man' in different ways. If 'man' here is a covertly equivocal term, then what happens to the theory of supposition, whereby a term has to have a settled signification before it enters a sentence and can be attributed different kinds of supposition?[116] But if 'man' here is a genuine univocal term, one with a single, settled signification, and if the mark of a univocal term is its role in contradiction, as Simplicius had said, do we not run the risk of such contradictories as "Man is a noun" and "Man is not a noun" both being acceptable?[117] A few of the authors I have considered did in-

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see Ashworth, "Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A New Approach to Aquinas."

114. Brito, *In SE*, as in Ebbesen, "The Dead Man Is Alive," pp. 60–61. Brito rejects the *homo mortuus* case as not properly one of analogy.

115. Brito, as in Ebbesen, p. 61: "dico quod de bonitate intellegentis ex quadam assuefactione potest esse quod terminus analogus secundum se sumptus stat pro primario eius significato, quia primo apprehendimus per terminum analogum suum primum significatum, illud enim est quod primo ibi occurrit intellectui."

116. Rosier points out that the relationship between supposition theory and univocal terms produced a view of univocity different from that current today. In her introduction to *L'ambiguïté: Cinq études historiques* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1988), p. 13, she wrote that *univoca* became "le concept clé de la théorie de la supposition, recouvrant un ensemble de phénomènes référentiels, ce qui le rend fort différent de ce que nous entendons aujourd'hui sous le terme *univoque*."

117. Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories d'Aristote, traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, ed. Adrien Pattin (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, and

clude different suppositions as a kind of equivocation;[118] but the main view seemed to be that acceptance or supposition could be classed under "diverse causes of truth" and should be distinguished from the case of "diverse significates." The reason given for the distinction was that difference in acceptance did arise from sentential context, whereas neither signification nor consignification could be altered in that way.[119] Aquinas himself said plainly that diversity of supposition did not cause equivocation.[120] Duns Scotus, on the other hand, adopted a more nuanced position. True equivocation is not involved because a word neither signifies nor consignifies different acceptances; but simple univocation is not involved either, since there is no single analysis of 'man' whereby the term can be truly predicated both of a species and of Socrates.[121] The question was one that was to be more

Paris: Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1971), 1:45: "Univocum autem non suscipit contradictionem." See also Duns Scotus's mature theory, discussed by Steven P. Marrone, "The Notion of Univocity in Duns Scotus's Early Works," *Franciscan Studies* 43 (1983): 350. Marrone does not note the possible historical antecedents of what he describes as Duns Scotus's "famous and more flexible definition" of univocity in terms of contradiction. So far as the example is concerned, Boethius (using the example *homo ambulat/homo non ambulat*) counted this type of case as preventing the formation of a true contradiction. See his *In librum de Interpretatione editio secunda*, in *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis "Peri Hermeneias,"* edited by Charles Meiser (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880), reprint ed. (New York and London: Garland, 1987), 2:133. See Rosier, "Evolution des notions d'*equivocatio* et *univocatio* au XIIe siècle," in *L'ambiguïté*, p. 118, especially n. 23; and Sten Ebbesen, *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle's Sophistici Elenchi: A Study of Post-Aristotelian Ancient and Medieval Writings on Fallacies* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 1:197–199. For more about fallacies of univocation in general, see De Rijk, *Logica Modernorum*, vol. 1, *passim*.

118. *Dialectica Monacensis*, p. 561, included material supposition; Bacon, *Summulae* 3:241–242, referred to supposition in general and gave simple as against personal supposition as an example. Rosier, "Evolution des notions d'*equivocatio* et *univocatio* au XIIe siècle," notes that in the first commentaries on the *Sophistical Refutations* there was hesitation about where to class paralogisms involving a shift from one kind of acceptance to another, and that they were eventually moved from equivocation to figure of speech or accident (see pp. 155–156 and *passim*).

119. CPDMA 7, pp. 106–107; John of Dacia, p. 371. See also Sten Ebbesen, "Can Equivocation Be Eliminated?" *Studia Mediewistyczne* 18 (1977): 107; and Alain de Libera, "The Oxford and Paris Traditions in Logic," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, p. 184.

120. "Diversitas suppositionis non facit aequivocationem; sed diversitas significationis." *Scriptum super Sent.* 3.6.1.3 ad 1.

121. Duns Scotus, *In Praed.*, p. 452A–B.

important in the fourteenth century, especially in the theories of Ockham and Buridan.[122]

CONCLUSION

What I have examined in this paper is a theory of language that tends to take words as units, endowed both with their signification and their *modi significandi* before they enter sentences and independently of speaker intention on any given occasion.[123] This attitude was reinforced by Priscian's claim that the noun has priority over other parts of speech, which led logicians to argue that the noun received its imposition first.[124] One might think that equivocal and analogical terms are precisely those whose functioning is best explained through context and use, but although Roger Bacon at least did recognize that any term could be used equivocally,[125] there was a tendency to speak as if equivocal and analogical terms formed special classes that could be identified in advance of use. To the extent that Aquinas's doctrine of analogy is embedded in such a general theory, one may fear that it will share the theory's defects.[126]

University of Waterloo

122. See E. J. Ashworth, "Equivocation and Analogy in Fourteenth-Century Logic: Ockham, Burley, and Buridan," in *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi: Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, ed. Burkhard Mojsisch and Olaf Pluta (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1991).

123. For some references to authors who paid more attention to speaker intention, see Rosier, "Signes et sacraments."

124. Priscian, 2:115–121. Priscian's remarks were used to show that an equivocal noun could not have a conjunctive signification, since syncategorematic terms were posterior to nouns. See CPDMA 7, p. 291. Compare Simon of Faversham, *In SE*, p. 68; Duns Scotus, *In SE*, p. 13A.

125. Karin Margareta Fredborg, Lauge Nielsen, and Jan Pinborg, "An Unedited Part of Roger Bacon's *Opus maius: De signis*," *Traditio* 34 (1978): 109–110.

126. I would like to thank Norman Kretzmann, for teaching me to read Aquinas, and the Canada Council, for the Killam Research Fellowship that has given me the time to write this essay.