

# The pedagogical character of the metaphor in Thomas Aquinas

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## Abstract

As early as in the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas saw the great pedagogical value of metaphor. This linguistic measure allowed for effective interdisciplinary research and teaching others. The metaphor was also useful in the educational process. But Aquinas also saw the limitations of metaphorical language and the dangers associated with it. Among them was the lack of linguistic precision necessary in some areas of knowledge and the danger of perceiving the world too materially. Generally, however, the metaphor plays a very important role, especially in the initial period of teaching and in navigating many areas of knowledge at the same time.

*Keywords: metaphor; pedagogical skills; language skills*

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## 1. Introduction

In the thirteenth century, in connection with the rediscovery of Aristotle's writings and their translation into Latin, research into the scientific language and the means that someone who wants to teach his students something can and should use. Among these linguistic means, one of the most controversial topics was the metaphor and its use in research and in the teaching process. No wonder then that Thomas Aquinas, as a representative figure of that time, in his reflections on the metaphorical language, directly referred to the fragments of works in which the Stagirite touched on this subject. Another source that was obviously used in the Middle Ages was the Bible, regarded as the most important authority. Which, moreover, was the decisive voice in the dispute about the possibility and usefulness of the use of metaphorical language in scientific research and in the educational process. And that voice ultimately allowed and even recommended the use of metaphor as an effective means of conveying the truth.

The dispute over metaphor itself emerged particularly strongly within theology as the field of knowledge considered the noblest in the Middle Ages, but it had its consequences for other sciences as well. And, what is equally important, it had a specific pedagogical dimension. Both when it comes to studying at universities and when it comes to teaching the complex truths of simple and uneducated people. The need for a metaphor arose in the answer: How to convey a

certain truth to them, although their minds were not yet adapted to it? This concerned mainly the transmission and teaching of the truths of faith, but not only.

## 2. The anthropological dimension of the necessity to use a metaphor

People need metaphors because of their cognitive processes that always appeal to the senses. And even when a man wants to know something that does not belong directly to the sphere of the senses, his cognition begins with what is sensual. Thomas notices this on the example of knowing the spiritual. All human cognition begins with the senses, and in the same way man can reach the non-sensible. This is simply the nature of man as a sensual-spiritual being. The very superiority of the spiritual by no means abolishes the need of the sensual as a path to spiritual truth. Therefore, when explaining the spiritual, and even the Scriptures themselves, one must do it with the carnal *“It is appropriate for Sacred Scripture to teach about divine and spiritual things by means of likenesses drawn from corporeal things. For God provides for all things in a way that is suitable to their nature. But it is natural for man to approach intelligible things through sensible things, since all our cognition takes its origin from the senses. Hence, it is appropriate for Sacred Scripture to teach us spiritual things by way of metaphors drawn from corporeal things”* (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, co).

In the human cognitive process in the case of a reality other than sensual, it is necessary to refer to the similarity to what is sensual. According to Thomas, only spiritual beings, such as angels, for example, do not have such necessity and do not need metaphors. But people, as spiritually-sensual beings, already like this: *“our structure differs from the angelic in that ours is perfected by God’s light hidden under bodily likenesses, both in the sacraments and in the metaphors of Holy Scripture; the angelic one is perfected by light directly and absolutely (...) So all angels, as it is accepted in this way, without inquisitive conversations and without a veil of figures perceive the divine light”* (Super Sent., lib. 2, d. 9, q. 1, a. 3, co).

The metaphor can also be used to know the sensual when it is still difficult for the human mind to access. In this way, by analogy to the human world, for example, what is animal is defined. And although we know that in the case of animals a given reality is not the same as human, the use of metaphorical language allows us to express it in some way. Thomas Aquinas notices this on the example of happiness, which we should only metaphorically ascribe to the animal world. *“Furthermore, the means to the end should be in proportion to the end. But the ultimate end which is felicity is appropriate only to voluntary agents, who are masters of their acts. Hence, we call neither inanimate things nor brute animals, happy, just as they are neither fortunate nor unfortunate, except metaphorically”* (Contra Gentiles, lib. 3, cap. 148, n. 6).

Aquinas emphasizes the sensuality of man, the consequence of which is the necessity to use metaphorical language. In many cases, it is the only way for even simple people to learn about complicated realities. While practically every human being knows with his senses and at almost every stage of his development, when it comes to intellectual and spiritual cognition, the matter is much more complicated. It depends on the development and formation of the individual. But how do you get started or how to teach the often-complicated intellectual truth to those who do not yet have such a skill? This is where the language of the metaphor comes in handy: *“it is appropriate*

*for spiritual things to be proposed by means of likenesses drawn from corporeal things, in order that Scripture might be grasped even by those who are so untutored as to be incapable of grasping what is intelligible in itself” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, co). It is no coincidence that it is the metaphor that also refers to the usual, often colloquial way of speaking - modus loquendi, the value of which was noticed by Aquinas (Roszak, 2013, p. 511-517).*

According to Aquinas, without recognizing the role of the senses in the cognitive process, the correct use of the metaphor becomes impossible. They cannot be omitted when constructing the way to know the un sensible. Thomas writes: *“There are two things we can ponder in spiritual creatures: that is, the same perfections of divine goodness as they are received; and they are called God, not symbolically but properly; as he is called wise and understanding and the like; as it is called in the Book De Causis, which calls God after the first cause, which is reason. Or we can consider them in a particular way of participating in some perfections, which way belongs to a particular nature or hierarchy of angels. Where the names expressing this way cannot be properly pronounced of God, or even metaphorically, since the metaphor consists of what is possible to be shown with the senses: and therefore they are never in Scripture. the names of Cherubim and Seraphim or the like ascribed to God, such as a lion or a bear, or other such” (Super Sent., lib. 1, d. 34, q. 3, a. 2, ad. 3.).*

### **3. Metaphor as a means of interdisciplinary research**

As we have already noted, metaphorical language allows us to cross the border of one reality and enables us to know a reality that is different, in some cases very distant. Such an approach to many areas at the same time, which we now call inter-disciplinary research, was not alien to Aquinas, which was largely made possible by the metaphor. Such was also his exegesis of Scripture. As Piotr Roszak writes *“This type of exegesis remains sensitive to metaphorical language and its literary depth without compromising the accuracy of meaning: it is open towards words and their power, their genealogy and range of meaning. It is a symbiosis of many factors that uncovers the multidimensionality of interpretation expressed in expositiones - a multidimensionality that is based on literal sense but opens the eyes of believers to a deep spiritual Sense: allegorical, moral and anagogical. Thomas does not stop at the level of word, but sees the convenientia of poetic and theological language” (P. Roszak, op. cit., s. 508).*

The metaphor is a good fit for the need for a multidimensional translation of the Scriptures, but also for such a view of the world, as a kind of linguistic vehicle enabling a scientific journey between sometimes very distant realities.

Thomas definitely rejects narrowing down the metaphor to realities that are close to each other, as in the case of describing the animal world, about which we wrote in the previous section. On the contrary. He sees as many as three benefits of using a metaphor to describe very distant things and things.

First, this kind of metaphor frees a person from the possibility of error - the distance between the realities compared in the metaphor avoids the possible confusion in the case of their proximity - *“First, in this way the mind is rendered more free from error. For it is obvious that*

*the figures in question are not being predicated properly of divine things, whereas there could be some doubt about this if divine things were described by figures drawn from the more noble bodies—especially in the eyes of those who did not know how to conceive of anything more noble than bodies” (Tamze).*

Secondly - it is the metaphor that is the most appropriate way of getting to know distant realities for our current human condition (in this case, Tomasz is about getting to know God himself) - „*Second, this mode of expression is more appropriate for the cognition that we have of God in this life. For as far as God is concerned, what He is not is clearer to us than what He is. And so likenesses drawn from things that are further removed from God produce in us the more accurate impression that God is beyond what we say or think about Him” (Tamze).*

Finally, thirdly, metaphorical language allows you to hide important information from ignorant and unworthy people – “*Third, this mode of expression is better at hiding divine things from those who are unworthy of them” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, ad. 3.).*

Despite the different realities that the metaphorical language tries to connect, metaphor always refers to a certain similarity. In fact, this is how it can be defined in the simplest way, which is what the medieval author does in his Summa Theologica: “*to teach something by means of a likeness is metaphorical” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, s. c.).*

And this similarity, as we have already mentioned, connects very different realities. In this way, we are able to teach something from a different field with the help of reports of knowledge already known. Therefore, it is knowledge of politics or navigation or physics that can be used to learn the truth about God. “*There is then some resemblance of proportionality, which consists in the same property of proportion as when we say: so is eight to four, as six to three; and how the ruler is to the city, and the commander is to the ship; and according to this similarity there is a transition from the fleshly to the divine: if we call God fire, it is because fire relates to anything that it influences through its warmth, so God, through His goodness, spreads perfection to all creatures” (Super Sent., lib. 1, d. 34, q. 3, a. 1, ad. 2.).*

In this way one can also discover the truth about the spiritual nature of some reality well known in the material world. For example, Thomas Aquinas describes believers referring to paintings known from the art of construction. “*The Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians is a perfect example of the method of blending similes and metaphors into big theological subjects and putting them together with biblical texts. In the prologue to this commentary, while comparing believers to columns, Aquinas says: “Believers are like columns, because they should be straight (recti), upright (erecti) and strong (forti). straight through faith, upright thanks to hope, and strong through love”” (In Eph., prol. ; P. Roszak, op. cit., s. 526).*

We can also get to know better something that is naturally more difficult for us to know also in ourselves. Therefore, metaphorical language is very useful in the analysis of human moral life. As an example, he gives Aquinas the relationship between the main defects and other human defects and sins, which is compared to the relationship between the commander of a military division and the division itself. What is external helps in getting to know the inside of a person. “*The fourth way in which one sin arises from another sin is one in which it is ordered as its purpose to that end, as when one is in the habit of stealing money, and the theft is born of greed; and what relates morally to the end is what is formally and holistically the source of one sin from another;*

*and according to this origin, it is appropriate to speak of the main defect (vitium capitale), and the metaphor of the head (capitis) is helpful here, according to which the commander of a military division is called the head of this division, as if the division is a commander for whose good the whole division is as-signed Book X of Metaphysics: thus we call this defect to which the other is assigned the main one. And that is why Gregory, commenting on the book of Job (Job 39, 25: "When he hears the trumpet, says: wah: he feels war from afar, the rebukes of the hetmans and the cry of the army), he perceived the main flaws as if army com-manders; and other disadvantages that arise from them he recognized as the army of these" (Super Sent., lib. 2, d. 42, q. 2, a. 3, co. See also: Super Sent., lib. 4, d. 21, q. 1, a. 2, qc. 1, co).*

Dlatego język metaforyczny jest tak przydatny w nauczaniu moralnym i w wychowaniu innych ludzi. Jej wymiar pedagogiczny w tym punkcie jest nie do przecenienia, co dostrzegali także średniowieczny mistrz. Stąd też wynikało jej szerokie zastosowanie w poezji.

Sometimes the metaphor becomes downright necessary. At the same time, it is not just about her poetic character - meant to please the ear of the listener - but about its real usefulness and necessity. Aquinas saw this in the case of theology. „*For St' Thomas, metaphors in the Holy Bible do not serve only as adornment, but they emerge from the deepest nature of theological language*” . In this way, man can not only enjoy the beauty of poetic language, but also use the same linguistic means to learn very different truths. „*A poet uses metaphors for the sake of representation it-self, since representation is naturally delightful to man. But, as noted above, sacred doctrine uses metaphors out of necessity and because of their usefulness*” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, ad 1.).

Another thing is that Aquinas himself, who wrote poetry, recognized its value for teaching and transmitting certain truths. In the case of a metaphor used in scientific research, knowing one reality makes it possible to know the reality of others. In this way, knowledge of material things allows an analogy with the spiritual world. For there is a certain similarity of proportions in metaphorical language, which we see in material things, and with this we can try to define spiritual things. “*Closeness or likeness is double. One that is by participation in some quality, just as hot is brought together; and this closeness of the non-corporeal to the bodily places cannot take place. Different by some proportionality according to which in the metaphors of Scripture. the carnal is likened to the spiritual; as when God is called the sun because He is the cause of the spiritual life, just like the sun of the natural life; and according to this convention to those souls to whom better places are assigned as souls enlightened like heavenly bodies; and dark places are assigned to souls obscured by guilt*” (Super Sent., lib. 4, d. 45, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 1, ad. 2.).

In this way, both poetry and the metaphorical language itself are useful, according to Thomas Aquinas, in the case of the need to translate very distant and difficult to understand realities, such as the issue of knowing God and the spiritual world. In order to reach the truth about God, we must use metaphorical language. „*Since it is possible to find in God every perfection of creatures, but in another and more eminent way, whatever names unqualifiedly designate a perfection without defect are predicated of God and of other things: for example, goodness, wisdom, being, and the like. But when any name expresses such perfections along with a mode that is proper to a creature, it can be said of God only according to likeness and metaphor. According to metaphor, what belongs to one thing is transferred to another, as when we say that a man is a stone because of the hardness of his intellect. Such names are used to designate the*

*species of a created thing, for example, man and stone, for to each species belongs its own mode of perfection and being. The same is true of whatever names designate the properties of things, which are caused by the proper principles of their species. Hence, they can be said of God only metaphorically” (Contra Gentiles, lib. 1, cap. 30, n. 2. See also: S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, co.).*

In this way, what we know from the human world can serve us to know God. This is the case, for example, with feelings that we can only judge about God metaphorically. God, without a body, cannot feel the sensual, and therefore, in this case, one cannot speak directly about feelings. If we say so, we use a metaphor. *„As is clear from what was said above (q. 13, a. 3), some things are predicated of God properly speaking and other things are predicated of Him metaphorically. When certain human passions are appropriated metaphorically in predications about God, this is because of a similarity in their effects—so that something that is a sign of a given passion in our case is signified metaphorically in God by the name of that passion. For instance, we ourselves are prone to punish someone when we are angry with him, so that the punishment is a sign of our anger. Because of this, it is the punishment itself that is signified by the name ‘anger’ when anger is attributed to God. Similarly, that which is normally in our case a sign of what we will is sometimes metaphorically called ‘will’ in the case of God. For instance, when someone commands something, this is a sign that he wills that thing to be done; hence, a divine command is sometimes metaphorically called ‘God’s will’—e.g., “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). However, there is a difference between ‘will’ and ‘anger’. For ‘anger’ is never properly predicated of God, since it includes a passion in its principal meaning; by contrast, ‘will’ is properly predicated of God. And so in the case of God ‘will’ as properly predicated is distinct from ‘will’ as metaphorically predicated. For when ‘will’ is properly predicated of God, it is called his ‘will of good pleasure’ (voluntas beneplaciti), whereas when ‘will’ is metaphorically predicated of God, it is called His ‘will of sign’ (voluntas signi), because a sign of His will is itself being called His will” (S. Th., I, q. 19, a. 11, co.).*

The same is true of ascribing human virtues to God - the efficiency of good. This is only possible metaphorically. *“Some of the moral virtues have to do with the passions. For instance, temperance (temperantia) has to do with sentient desires, fortitude (fortitudo) has to do with fear and daring, and gentleness (mansuetudo) has to do with anger. Virtues of this sort cannot belong to God except metaphorical-ly, since, as was explained above (q.20, a.1), in God there are no passions; moreover, in God there is no sentient appetite, which, according to the Philosopher in Ethics 3, is the subject in which virtues of this sort exist. On the other hand, some moral virtues have to do with actions; for instance, justice and generosity (liberalitas) and magnificence (magnificentia) have to do with giving and taking. These virtues exist not in the sentient part of the soul, but in the will. Hence, nothing prevents virtues of this sort from being posited in God —yet not with respect to civic actions, but rather with respect to actions that are appropriate for God. For, as the Philosopher says in Ethics 10, it would be ridiculous to praise God for His political virtues” (S. Th., I, q. 21, a. 1, ad. 1).*

Importantly, the metaphor makes it easier to get to know distant reality, other-wise often inaccessible to the learner. This is the only way to know, for example, the creation of the world, or imagine the fate of those condemned to damn evil angels.

Of course, the metaphor shows the truth in a relative way - not directly. There-fore, it is necessary to refer to something, e.g. existing in time, although time itself is not useful in predicting

the essence of God. But through the creatures existing in time, one can somehow specify the truth about the Creator. This was the case, according to Aquinas, in the case of clarifying the truth about the unity existing in God: *"the unity which we proclaim about God is neither creator nor creature: it is as if in himself, it is not something according to things, but according to justification. It is therefore not a false justification when we define it on the basis of the relation of creation to the creator: as it is also in other relative judgments which are pronounced about God in time, like the Lord and the like"* (Super Sent., lib. 3, d. 5, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 1, ad. 3.).

The same is true of attempts to apply quantitative or spatial categories to describe the human soul. So when Jesus' disciples are referred to in the Scriptures as "the light of the world," this is the use of metaphorical language. *"And so others say that it is in the fourth species of quality: for that configuration, which character expresses in its name, conveys unity of figure, which is in the fourth species of quality. And some people say that this figure is the cross of Christ. But this cannot stand: for figure is taken either properly or metaphorically. If it is taken properly, then it conveys the termination of a dimensive quantity, which clearly does not exist in the soul. But if it is said metaphorically, then the metaphor must be traced back to a proper sense; just as it is not being said that the apostles are in the genus of quality when it is said to them, you are the light of the world (Matt 5:14). Nor could anything be found in the fourth species of quality that is in the soul in the proper sense. Hence the character of which we speak cannot be founded on a quality of the fourth species"* (Super Sent., lib. 4, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1, co.).

Sometimes a very strong metaphor - forte - is used to show the paradox of a given situation and to explicitly exclude something that is impossible. This is how Aquinas describes the issue of the non-existence of sensuality in God. *"It is said that God does not know the details. After all, Boethius says that what is common when we understand, what is particular when we feel it with our senses. But there is no sensual potency in God that is impressed by the sensory organ, unless we say it with a strong metaphor (forte metaphorice sumendo). Thus we see that it is fitting for God to know in detail"* .

On the one hand, metaphor is supposed to facilitate getting to know a reality. But it also does so paradoxically by somehow obscuring it. *"But this kind of metaphors or symbolic expressions are like a veil of truth"* (Super Sent., lib. 1, d. 34, q. 3, a. 1, arg. 3). In this way, metaphorical language can encourage the student to try to reveal a reality, to look behind a veil. *"Et ipsa etiam occultatio figurarum utilis est, ad exercitium studiosorum"*, the medieval author points out in *Sum theologian* (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, co.).

Sometimes this veil is even necessary to adapt the conveyed content to a specific recipient. This is the case with knowing God. *"Et hoc est quod dicit Dionysius, I cap. caelestis hierarchiae, impossibile est nobis aliter lucere divinum radium, nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum"* . The perception of certain content is possible for the knower only through a veil of metaphor (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, co.).

This obscuring function of the metaphor also makes it possible to defend the secrets of knowledge from being profaned by people immature to accept it. The greater the distance between the two parts of the metaphor, the more difficult it is for novices to understand and makes [certain truths inaccessible to people who are not ready or unworthy to accept them: *"per huiusmodi, divina magis occultantur indignis"* (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, ad. 3).

In this way, metaphorical language can be used to defend, for example, the truths of faith against the attack and mockery of non-believers: “*contra irrisiones infidelium, de quibus dicitur, Matth. VII, nolite sanctum dare canibus*” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, ad. 2).

In this way, a metaphor that is understandable only to those who share a given value system allows to protect special knowledge from its wrong, inconsistent use. „*Modus loquendi must be appropriate and must not contribute towards purposeful misleading or misunderstanding. It is in this spirit that Thomas understands a fragment from the Book of Jeremiah (23, 23-32) (In Ier., cap. 28, lect. 9.), which contains Yahweh's criticism directed against prophets 'abusing' words to achieve their goals, and it is an attitude that Aquinas summarizes as irrisio verborum. Here, the method of speaking means faithfulness in conveying what was heard from God, and not embellishing or completing it*” (P. Roszak, op. cit., s. 214).

#### 4. The limitations of the metaphor

However, one should always remember about the limitations of metaphorical language. It never shows the whole truth about a given reality, but only a fragment of it. The similarity to which a metaphor refers cannot be extended to cover the totality of the reality or phenomenon it refers to. „*This position, of course, had as its occasion the words of the Apostle: “In habit found as a man” (Phil. 2:70). They did not understand that this was said metaphorically. But things said metaphorically need not be similar in every respect. So, the human nature assumed by the Word has a kind of likeness to clothing, in that the Word was seen in His visible flesh just as a man is seen in his clothing; but the likeness is not in this, that the union of the Word to human nature in Christ was in an accidental mode*” (Contra Gentiles, lib. 4, cap. 37, n. 11.).

It was the inaccuracy of the metaphorical language that was one of the arguments, ultimately rejected by Thomas Aquinas, for eliminating him from theology, which required the highest kind of precision. “*That which is proper to the lowest doctrine does not seem to be suitable for the science of sacred doctrine, which, as already noted, holds the highest place among the other sciences. But to proceed by means of various likenesses and representations is proper to poetics, which is the lowest among all doctrines. Therefore, using likenesses of this sort is not appropriate for the science of sacred doctrine*” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, arg. 1).

The same threat could accompany philosophy. Metaphorical language would favor idealistic concepts, the real verification of which would be impossible. Hence its great utility in poetry and limited in the philosophical sciences. “*We see that ideas don't exist. For, as the philosopher says: talking about exemplary ideas is empty words, it is uttering petition metaphors. But exemplate ideas are called things. So it is vain to talk about ideas*” (Super Sent., lib. 1, d. 36, q. 2, a. 1, arg. 1.).

The danger that a metaphor can bring is also the possibility of being too attached to metaphorical language. When the learner will concentrate more and even pause on what we compare the reality to which we would like to know. In this case, theology seems to be, according to Aquinas, particularly safe, because theological knowledge is conditioned by the grace of revelation, which does not allow us to stop at material similarities - „*Rather, it remains in its truth,*



*so that it does not allow the minds to which the revelation is made to persist in the likenesses, but instead raises them to the cognition of intelligible things—and through these minds to which the revelation has been made others are also instructed about those intelligible things” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, ad. 2.).*

This is also because metaphor in theology compares realities extremely distant from each other and therefore difficult to confuse. The greater the space between the compared cases, the lower the risk of error. *„For it is obvious that the figures in question are not being predicated properly of divine things, whereas there could be some doubt about this if divine things were described by figures drawn from the more noble bodies—especially in the eyes of those who did not know how to conceive of anything more noble than bodies” (S. Th., I, q. 1, a. 9, ad. 3.).*

Another threat to the free and excessive use of metaphorical language is assigning a literal meaning to the metaphor. Instead of noticing a certain similarity of different realities, one simply identifies them with each other. Here, Thomas Aquinas sees the value of a common way of speaking - *modus loquendi* - known to all concerned, which would not allow him to fall into the trap of a literal metaphor. As Piotr Roszak points out *„expression modus loquendi is also used by Aquinas to highlight the intensity of metaphorical language that he discovers in a text, and to draw attention to the importance of proper reading of the sense of metaphors. Literal sense does not mean that Thomas interprets metaphors literally: "arm of God" (brachium Dei) does not mean that God has an arm as humans do, but signifies God's power that works effectively for peoples' benefit. Metaphor is supposed to lead towards the reading of the literal sense, it is in a sense at its service. That is why Thomas classifies it this way sub sensu litterali includitur parabolicus seu metaphoricus” (In GaL., cap. IV, lect.'7 ; P. Roszak, op. cit., s. 214.).*

But also, the metaphor cannot be the only or even the main linguistic means in science. Rather, it is a kind of introduction and invitation to research and use of other means (Masson, 2009, 111-128, 127-128).

This was the case with Aquinas' linguistic strategy, who kept this propaedeutic character of the metaphor, which allowed him to avoid the dangers that are characteristic of, for example, for modern theology or philosophy, when metaphorical language is used as the main, basic, or even linguistic means. This is at the expense, as noted by Herwi Rikhof, of the coherence of scientific concepts. *„Furthermore, on Rikhof's own account, that takes into consideration the insights of contemporary theories of metaphor, 'a completely metaphorical theological language, is not a coherent conception” (Rikhof, 1981, p. 190).*

This happens when, for example, the metaphor somehow takes over other linguistic means, when, for example, it is completely identified with analogy, also in the interpretation of the metalanguage of Thomas Aquinas. *„While an undifferentiated identification of metaphor and analogy ultimately creates more problems than it solves, a distinction something like the notion of higher-order metaphor is necessary to explain how religious and theological language work, at least for Christians and in Thomas's theology.” (Masson, p. 112, Rikhof, 2006, p. 103-136).*

After all, the metaphor itself as a linguistic means is clearly appreciated by Aquinas, which does not mean overestimated. Especially when it comes to its pedagogical nature, which is to introduce the student to the often-complicated way of scientific thinking. Metaphorical language turns out to be something very useful, and sometimes even irreplaceable in the educational process.

Especially when we are dealing with very difficult content or we want to protect some knowledge against its misuse.

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