

Equivocal Transcendence:
Situating Heidegger's Ontology within a Medieval Schema

by

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ABSTRACT

During the Middle Ages, scholastic thinkers debated the question of whether being is univocal, analogical, or equivocal. Drawing from the tension between Thomistic *analogia entis* and Scotistic univocity, I argue that Heidegger's early ontology crosses the boundaries that demarcate this triple distinction between univocal, analogical, and equivocal being. In Heidegger's ontology, being is univocal insofar as it is considered in itself and analogical insofar as Dasein, non-Dasein entities, and being are concerned, while the relationship between God and being is equivocal. These relationships are, in turn, hierarchically related such that equivocality grounds univocity which is, in turn, more fundamental than analogy. Now, because the equivocal relationship between God and being is more fundamental than the univocity of being, Heidegger's fundamental ontology is governed by a more primordial commitment to keep God at a distance. Hence, the hierarchy that obtains between the three medieval categories brings into suspicion Heidegger's allegedly basic ontology. Far from being a neutral articulation of the way being reveals itself, Heidegger's ontology is, more fundamentally, theologically grounded.

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1 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: HarperPerennial, 2008), H 250.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Univocity lurks in the very question motivating Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*. The question, "what is the meaning of being?",¹ though seemingly basic and fundamental, is, in fact, complex at its core for it harbours several important assumptions within it.² These assumptions are significant because they suggest that Heidegger pursues the question of being in a univocal, rather than in an analogical or equivocal, sense. Indications that this is so include the fact that the question of the meaning of being implies that there is one being ("what is the meaning of *being*?") and one meaning of being ("what is *the meaning* of being?"). In other words, that Heidegger does not ask what the meanings of being are or what the meaning of beings is suggests that he is trying to think being in a specific, singular, and encompassing sense. Far from beginning with a blank slate or ignoring all previous considerations of being (both impossible gestures), Heidegger follows one approach to being to the exclusion or at least the

1 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), H1-15.

2 This having been said, the fact that covert assumptions rest within Heidegger's basic question does not undermine the remainder of his thought. Unlike Hegel, Heidegger does not claim that his philosophy is without presuppositions. As he explains in section four of *Being and Time*, the question of the meaning of being presupposes that we already have a fuzzy idea – a pre-understanding – of what being means: "[U]nderstanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being [One had] being in such a way that one has an understanding of Being" (H12). Hence, *Being and Time* is largely an articulation or clarification of what any given person *already* understands – albeit in a fuzzy way – of being. For more on this, see below.

marginalization of others. But, though Heidegger asks after a singular meaning of being, does he end with a univocal understanding of it? Is he a thinker of univocity in the vein of Gilles Deleuze and Duns Scotus,³ or does he reject it in favour of analogy or equivocity? In what follows and through a study of Heidegger's early writings, I argue that the relationship between early Heidegger's ontology and the three scholastic categories of being is by no means straightforward. While the early Heidegger *does* implicitly endorse a univocal conception of being, he also supports equivocity when dealing with the relationship between God and being, while the relationship he articulates between Dasein, being, and all non-Dasein entities is characterized by analogy. Heidegger's ontology takes place between Scotus' and Deleuze's. Like Deleuze's ontology, Heidegger's philosophy is *opposed* to the Platonism (of Plato as well as Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy) that tries to chain and highest being with all caused and participating beings. In other words, Heidegger endorses a univocal conception of being (like Scotus and Deleuze) while eliminating the infinite end of the spectrum (like

3 As we will see, to place Gilles Deleuze and Duns Scotus within the same trajectory is deeply problematic. Deleuze's interpretation of Scotus is highly misleading and does not respect Scotus' nuanced ontology. For Deleuze's appropriation of Scotus, see *Difference and Repetition* trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 44-49; Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 18-28; Daniel W. Smith, "The Doctrine of Univocity: Deleuze's Ontology of Immanence," in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. Mary Bryden (London: Routledge, 2001), 167-183; Nathan Widder, "The Rights of Simulacra: Deleuze and the Univocity of Being," *Continental Philosophy Review* 34, no. 4 (2001): 437-453. Unfortunately, there are no reliable criticisms of Deleuze's use of Scotus. For two helpful critiques of modern interpretations of Scotus see Richard Cross, "Where Angels Fear to Tread: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy," *Antonianum* (2001): 7-41 and Thomas Williams, "The Doctrine of Univocity is True and Salutory," *Modern Theology* 21, no.4 (2005): 575-585.

Deleuze). Aquinas' God-with-being becomes a God-outside-being.⁴ Nevertheless, unlike Deleuze who consistently avoids God, the early Heidegger does not settle for atheistic philosophy. He leaves a space for God *outside* of philosophy where God is allowed to be God: where God is not subjected to the concepts of metaphysics and whence God can reveal himself as he wills to whomever he decides. Hence, in short, Heidegger is neither a Scotist nor a Deleuzian, but works out his philosophy (to speak achronologically) between Scotus and Deleuze. Moreover, throughout, Heidegger is adamantly opposed to a Thomistic (and Radical Orthodox) understanding of *analogia entis*. For Heidegger, there is no way in which God is related, whether through participation or through some other means, to being. God and being are equivocal. Analogy in Heidegger's ontology centres around Dasein's relation to being and non-Dasein entities. And this analogy is always secondary to univocal being.

But even if Heidegger is a thinker of univocal, equivocal, or analogical being, why does it matter? Perhaps the distinction between univocity, analogy, and equivocality is a merely *superfluous or scholastic* distinction that ought to pass through Ockham's razor. Against this view, I argue that the question of univocal, analogical, or equivocal being is

4 Unfortunately, I do not have the space to devote to Heidegger's relation to negative theology. For some already published studies of Heidegger and negative theology, see Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texts*, trans. Thomas Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and Chrestos Giannaras' neglected work, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite*, trans. Haralambos Ventis (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005). In the second text, Giannaras argues that Heidegger's critique of onto-theology ignores the apophatic tradition as exemplified by Pseudo-Dionysius.

both urgent and relevant to the history of philosophy as well as contemporary philosophy. With respect to the history of philosophy, Heidegger's position is significant because it marks a *new* thinking of being that does not defend one thinking of being to the absolute exclusion of others; on the contrary, Heidegger is able to coherently think univocity, equivocity, and analogy concurrently. In a certain way, he manages to avoid the debate between *analogia entis* and *univocatio entis* by offering an alternative view.⁵ With respect to contemporary philosophy, Heidegger's early ontology is significant because it is closely tied to recent investigations of atheism and theism *as well as* of secularity and theology. Currently, Radical Orthodox philosophical theologians, such as John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, argue that the secular world and, with it, the prevalence of liberal capitalism, is predicated on a misguided and often clandestine philosophical commitment to univocal being. By contrast, the late Gilles Deleuze argues that philosophy is only possible if univocal being is assumed. Broadly speaking, then, we have, on the one hand, those who claim that philosophy is impossible without univocity, and those, on the other hand, who maintain that a univocal understanding of being is to blame for many of the alleged failures of modern society (alienation, individualism, capitalism). Though there are many who would position themselves outside of either camp, it initially seems that one cannot successfully exempt oneself from the dilemma. And yet, as we will see, Heidegger *does* manage to exempt himself from this specific

5 For some interesting medieval attempts to reconcile univocal and analogical being, see Stephen Dumont, "Transcendental Being: Scotus and Scotists," *Topoi* 11 (1992): 135-148.

dilemma. So, in addition to situating Heidegger's thought in a relation to scholastic philosophy, this thesis will also examine how Heidegger's thinking of being fits in with two distinct post-Heideggerian ontologies: those of Deleuze and Radical Orthodoxy.

In order to do this, we will need first to examine Thomas Aquinas' and Duns Scotus' competing understandings of being in order to (1) define the key terms – analogy, univocity, equivocity – and (2) realize that these key terms are used variously. Following our encounter with Aquinas and Scotus, we will briefly survey Gilles Deleuze's ontology of immanence as well as Radical Orthodoxy's theology of transcendence. After this, we will turn to Heidegger and spend most of the remainder of the thesis clarifying how the early Heidegger simultaneously endorses univocity, equivocity, and analogy. To conclude, we will bring Heidegger's ontology into dialogue with his Scholastic predecessors and European successors, showing that, throughout, Heidegger struggles to articulate an ontology that is immanent *as well as* transcendent. Like the Scholastics, Heidegger wants to leave open a place for God and the 'faithful life'. However, like Deleuze, Heidegger adamantly excludes this God from philosophy on the grounds that being and God are incommensurate: all who bring God into philosophy and, consequently, into the domain of being, are violently working against his very character. Hence, Heidegger is neither an immanentist nor a philosopher of transcendence: his

philosophy is, rather, the consequence of divided interests and a troubling commitment to divine alterity as well as to an atheistic and fallen philosophy.

1.1 Literature Review

Though very little has been published on Heidegger and Scholasticism's triple ontological distinction, there are a few studies to which we should pay attention. In all of the literature, Philip Tonner offers what is, without question, the longest study of Heidegger and univocity in his dissertation-turned-book *Heidegger, Metaphysics and the Univocity of Being*. In this text, Tonner claims that “[h]owsoever Heidegger characterizes his philosophy of being explicitly; his concept of being is, implicitly, univocal.”⁶ Moreover, Tonner brings to his study the Deleuzian conviction that philosophy ought to be immanent and that being is necessarily univocal. His study of Heidegger, in turn, is his attempt to place him within a Deleuzian lineage. Though I agree with Tonner that Heidegger puts forward a univocal understanding of being, Tonner's affinity with Deleuze leads him to craft some murky interpretations of Heidegger. To begin with, Tonner's argument that being is unified within time is unclear. He never really explains how that “[i]n Heidegger, the univocity of being emerges as the temporal configuration

⁶ Philip Tonner, *Heidegger, Metaphysics and the Univocity of Being* (New York: Continuum Press, 2010), 4.

of being, understood as meaningful presence”⁷ really leads to the univocity of being even though he repeatedly refers to the relation between being and time. If being is unified within time, what status does time have with respect to univocity? Throughout, Tonner fails to explain what “the temporal configuration of being” means. Moreover, as Jeremiah Hackett notices, Tonner does not emphasize the distinction that Heidegger makes between the being of Dasein and the being of all other entities. Rather, Tonner takes Heidegger to be opposed to the medieval and Cartesian philosophies of analogy *and yet*, as Hackett explains, “[i]t was precisely the residue of Cartesian immanence theory in Husserl that Heidegger in *Being and Time* sought to overcome.”⁸ In other words, Heidegger challenges, in *Being and Time*, Descartes' notion that human beings (Dasein) and non-human beings are all on the same level. Instead, he asserts that there is a *qualitative difference* between beings who are able to ask about the meaning of being and those that cannot. Hence, Tonner's analysis does not succeed in articulating either the role of time with respect to univocity or the clear distinction between human and non-human beings.

In addition to Philip Tonner's work, Thomas Sheehan briefly offers a second approach to Heidegger and univocity in several of his published essays. Contra Tonner,

7 Ibid., 3.

8 Jeremiah Hackett, “Heidegger, Metaphysics and the Univocity of Being,” review of *Heidegger, Metaphysics and the Univocity of Being*, by Philip Tonner, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, February 24, 2011, <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24615-heidegger-metaphysics-and-the-univocity-of-being/>.

Sheehan argues that the meaning of being that Heidegger offers us is one that is *analogically unified*. Having read Franz Brentano's book *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*⁹ as a youth, Heidegger develops a phenomenology that shows how these several senses of being are, in fact, unified, but only analogically:

[Heidegger shaped] the question about the meaning of being into the question about the essence of the phenomenological correlation, that is, about the analogical unity underlying all possible ways in which entities can present themselves and thus be humanly appropriated.¹⁰

As Sheehan sees it, Heidegger *does* ask about a single meaning of being, but the answer he provides offers us a thinking of being that is *analogical*. Moreover, as Sheehan says elsewhere:

Heidegger was not after a univocal something that subsists on its own. Over and above the Being of man, the Being of implements, nature, artworks and ideal objects, there is no second level of 'Being itself'. Rather, the 'itself' refers to the analogically unified meaning of Being . . . which is instantiated in all cases of the Being of this or that.¹¹

In other words, the being of man (Dasein) and the being of a cup do not share the same kind of grounding and univocal sense of being because being, as such, is not a being; but

9 Franz Brentano, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, trans. Rolf George (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

10 Thomas Sheehan, "Reading a Life: Heidegger and Hard Times," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 2nd edition, ed. Charles B. Guignon (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 82.

11 Thomas Sheehan, "Introduction: Heidegger, the Project and the Fulfillment," in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent, 1981), viii.

because Dasein and a cup both have being (though they are not grounded in any one subsisting being) they cannot be equivocally related. Hence, Sheehan concludes, Dasein and a cup are analogically related. Though Sheehan does not specify *how* Dasein and non-Dasein entities are analogically related, it would seem, from his description, that they are related through what we will understand to be the analogy of relation.

Peter Dillard also offers us a study of Heidegger and Duns Scotus in his book *Heidegger and Philosophical Atheology: A Neo-Scholastic Critique*.¹² In the text, Dillard *does* touch on univocal being, but only briefly. In the second chapter, Dillard points out that Heidegger, throughout his career, endorsed some version of univocity:

[E]arly Heidegger sides with Scotus: to say that something has being *per se* is to say the same thing, whether one is talking about rocks, houses, or humans. These beings may have being in various phenomenologically manifestable modes . . . yet there remains a univocal sense in which they have being. A commitment to the univocity of being is retained in later Heidegger as well.”¹³

Though, apart from this brief acknowledgment, Dillard has relatively little to say about univocity. Furthermore, unlike Tonner, who approves of Heidegger's univocity and atheism, Dillard criticizes Heidegger for replacing the God of the Scholastics with “the ultimate contingency of Appropriation.”¹⁴ Appropriation, Dillard claims, is, for Heidegger,

12 Peter Dillard, *Heidegger and Philosophical Atheology: A Neo-Scholastic Critique* (New York: Continuum, 2008).

13 *Ibid.*, 29.

14 *Ibid.*, 56.

the primordial sending-out; it is the 'it' in 'it gives' (*Es gibt*). Appropriation "gives' both time and being. As such, Appropriation is explanatory prior to time and being."¹⁵ Hence, in order to refute Heidegger's onto-theology (which Dillard takes as being an outright rejection of Scholastic philosophy), Dillard takes it upon himself to contrast Heidegger's defense of Appropriation as a first principle with Scotus' argument for the existence of God. The philosopher with the better justification wins. As a result, Dillard's book, *Heidegger and Philosophical Atheology* is a kind of wrestling match between Heidegger and Scotus in which Scotus, as the hero for medieval philosophy and Christian metaphysics, comes out as the victor.

Though Dillard's reconstruction of Scotus' argument for the existence of God makes his book worthwhile, his largely questionable approach to Heidegger detracts from the monograph. As Sean McGrath states in a review:

In my view, Dillard and Heidegger are not talking about the same thing. Appropriation is not the opposite of necessary being, not a challenge to Scotus' causal argument, and therefore cannot be fed into a Scotistic disjunction.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁶ Sean McGrath, "Heidegger and Philosophical Atheology: A Neo-Scholastic Critique," review of *Heidegger and Philosophical Atheology*, by Peter Dillard, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, August 24, 2009, <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24134-heidegger-and-philosophical-atheology-a-neo-scholastic-critique/>.

Hence, that Dillard does not describe in detail *how* Heidegger is a univocal thinker and the fact that Dillard's reading of Heidegger is problematic shows that *Heidegger and Philosophical Atheism* leaves work to be done.

Following another track, both John Caputo and Sean McGrath provide us with more historical studies of the implications involved in Heidegger's early theological dealings. Though Caputo reviews Heidegger's relation to theology in his essay "Heidegger and Theology,"¹⁷ his most extensive investigation into the relationship between Heidegger medieval thought lies in his monograph, *Heidegger and Aquinas*.¹⁸ In the latter, Caputo devotes the first section to a summary of Heidegger's engagement and subsequent critique of the Thomist and Scholastic tradition. But aside from a few brief summaries of Heidegger's early writings – including his *Habilitationsschrift* – this section is of little value for us because its central aim, as opposed to our own, is to defend Heidegger's original thinking of the ontic-ontological difference against modern Thomists. Whereas some modern Thomists, such as Johannes Lotz and Bertrand Rioux, assert that Aquinas is the more radical thinker of being and truth, Caputo argues to the contrary: it is only with Heidegger that we have the most genuine thinking of the 'it' that 'gives' ontological difference. So whereas my thesis has to do with the relationship between Heidegger's ontology and two medieval and two modern ontologies (Deleuze's

17 John Caputo, "Heidegger and Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 270-288.

18 John Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982).

and Radical Orthodoxy's), Caputo's book attempts to clarify Heidegger's thought for those modern Thomists who have been misreading him. As such, Caputo's work does little to augment my own.

Finally, Sean McGrath, in his studies of Heidegger's relation to medieval philosophy, argues that, in some key respects, Heidegger clearly borrows from the Subtle Doctor.¹⁹ To begin with, Heidegger's understanding of being largely resembles Scotus' conception of univocal being:

[T]he central impulse of Scotus's metaphysics, the search for a unifying concept of being, which makes all univocal, analogical [*sic*], and metaphorical predications possible, is transposed by Heidegger into a transcendental phenomenological key, while remaining basically intact. Heidegger has no sympathy for Thomist *analogia entis*.²⁰

Nevertheless, in his appropriation of Scotus, Heidegger rejects Scotus' infinite mode of being as *unessential*,²¹ making Heidegger's ontology much more immanent than Scotus'. Furthermore, this corresponds with the former's avowed methodological atheism, an atheism that keeps God or the divine out of rigorous philosophy. McGrath then goes on

19 Sean McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006); "The Facticity of Being Godforsaken: The Young Heidegger's Accommodation of Luther's Theology of the Cross," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79, No. 2: 273-290.

20 McGrath, *The Early Heidegger*, 91.

21 "Heidegger's refusal to entertain infinite ontological predicates might be read as an intensification of the Scotist project" (*Ibid.*, 91-92) and "Heidegger wants a Scotus whose *univocatio entis* has no infinite mode" (*Ibid.*, 117).

to link this immanentization of being and methodological atheism with Heidegger's early fascination with Martin Luther. For Luther, philosophy is inherently turned against God because the natural intellect, taken apart from divine revelation and in its postlapsarian state, cannot properly know the truth. According to Luther, the philosophies of Aristotle, Plato, and the Scholastics are all attempts to naturally know the world apart from God's aid. But the scholastic project is, above all, incoherent because, being both Christian and philosophical, it tries to acknowledge the sinfulness of humanity in its theology even as it denies this fallenness through its implicit assumption that we can trust our reason: "Luther's most significant influence on the young Heidegger was the critique of Scholasticism as the *theologia gloriae*, the presumption of a natural and speculative access to God, which is no longer possible for us after the Fall."²² Luther claims that, as a result of the Fall, philosophy (humanity's futile attempt to reason correctly) must be replaced with a *theologia crucis*, a theology that centers itself on the crucified and risen Saviour. But, though Heidegger was heavily influenced by Luther, he does follow Luther at this point; Heidegger does not abandon philosophy after reading Luther. Rather, as McGrath explains, after agreeing with Luther that philosophy must be distinguished from theology, Heidegger turns from theology to pursue a God-less philosophy. We must, Heidegger contends, pursue a philosophy that "amounts to raising one's hand

²² Ibid., 153.

against God.”²³ Hence, what both Luther and Heidegger agree on is that Christian theology should be kept separate from philosophy. They differ in deciding how to continue once this concession is made. Hence, “the phenomenology of *Being and Time* . . . is far from theologically neutral;”²⁴ rather, Heidegger's philosophy is motivated by his covert commitment to Luther's *theologia crucis*:

Heidegger conceives the hermeneutics of facticity as an atheological complement to Luther's *theologia crucis*, a philosophy that stays with the Godforsakenness of human life and leaves to theology the thematization of the world of meaning disclosed in faith.²⁵

For the most part, I agree with McGrath's conclusions, though, in what follows, far from simply repeating them, I will focus more on the various ways being, God, and Dasein are related in Heidegger's ontology, and what these relations imply. Whereas McGrath focuses on how Heidegger gradually developed his philosophy through his readings of Luther and Scotus, this thesis will take a more systematic approach to the general structure of Heidegger's early ontology. I will then show how Heidegger's ontology is situated between Scotistic and Deleuzian understandings of being, all of which are

23 Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with Aristotle: An Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation,” in *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond*, trans. John van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 193-194.

24 Philipp Rosemann, “The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken,” review of *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken*, by Sean McGrath, *Analecta Hermeneutica* 1 (2009): 344.

25 McGrath, *The Early Heidegger*, 153.

responses to *analogia entis*. With this said, let us now begin with Thomas Aquinas' understanding of analogy.

Chapter 2

Univocity, Analogy, and Equivocity

In this chapter we will examine the meanings of univocity, analogy, and equivocity, while paying special attention to univocity and noting throughout that the term is historically conditioned. We will begin, in the first section, with Thomas Aquinas' understanding of univocity, and then show, in the second section, how it differs from that of Duns Scotus: whereas Aquinas takes univocal being to have ontological implications, Scotus' theory of univocity is largely logical, devoid of ontological implications. After a brief summary in section three, we will examine, in the fourth and fifth sections, how that, in the twentieth century, Gilles Deleuze and his Radical Orthodox critics merge Scotus' and Aquinas' understandings in such a way that when Deleuze's endorsement of univocity is more opposed to Aquinas' position than an extension of Scotus'. Similarly, when Radical Orthodox theologians denounce univocity, though they nominally oppose Scotus, their understanding of univocity is, in fact, largely determined by Deleuze's misreading of Scotus. In the sixth section we will summarize our findings once again, noting that, as the debate between Deleuzian atheism and Radical Orthodox theism shows, contemporary understandings of univocal being are closely related to the question of the relationship between God and philosophy. Immanent and univocal ontologies are

more likely to reduce or ignore the difference between God and nature, theology and philosophy, while ontologies of analogy tend to emphasize divine transcendence and external relation to nature. Hence, two oppositions appear: between immanent (Deleuze and Heidegger) and transcendent (Aquinas, Scotus, Radical Orthodoxy) ontologies and between advocates of analogical (Aquinas, Radical Orthodoxy) and univocal (Scotus) language about the divine. These oppositions, moreover, can be placed into three groups: (1) transcendent-analogical (Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy), (2) transcendent-univocal (Scotus), and (3) immanent-univocal (Deleuze and Heidegger) understandings of being and predication. The following analyses will be important for our subsequent reading of early Heidegger because they will allow us to more carefully situate Heidegger's ontology within contemporary (and medieval) theories of the relation between theology and philosophy.

2. 1 *Thomas Aquinas*

We will consider Thomas Aquinas' theory of analogy first because it is the most well known and because in it Aquinas sets out the definitions for many of the debates that

followed.²⁶ For the sake of clarity, we will only consider Aquinas' mature understanding of analogy, that is, his interpretation of analogy as it is articulated in two of his later works: his *Summa Contra Gentiles*²⁷ and his *Summa Theologiae*.²⁸ Moreover, before engaging with these works, we must make some preliminary distinctions. First of all, we must keep in mind the distinction between 'semantic analogy' and 'ontological analogy'. Whereas the former refers to analogies as they appear in language, the latter, based on the former, refers to relations between various kinds of beings, entities, or being.²⁹ We will concern ourselves with the former only insofar as it is useful for understanding the latter. Now, in addition to the above distinction, we must also recognize two kinds of ontological analogy: the first refers to the (Aristotelian) relationship between substance

26 There are a number of important studies of Aquinas' theory of analogy. These include Bernard Montagnes, *La Doctrine de l'Analogie de L'Être d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Publications Universitaires, 1963) translated into English as Bernard Montagnes, *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being According to Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Andrew Tallon (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004); Ralph McInerney, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996); George P. Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960). Cardinal Cajetan's divisions of analogy have been used to interpret Aquinas though, in recent years, most agree that Cajetan's categories cannot be accurately applied to Aquinas' work. For more on this, see the above three monographs as well as E. J. Ashworth, "Medieval Theories of Analogy" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1999, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/analogy-medieval/>. For Cajetan's work on analogy, see Thomas De Vio Cajetan, *The Analogy of Names and Concept of Being*, trans. Edward A. Bushinski and Henry Koren (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009).

27 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, ed. Joseph Kenny (New York: Hanover House, 1955-57), accessed November 20, 2012, <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/ContraGentiles.htm>.

28 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Blackfriars, 61 vols (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964-1981).

29 In a certain sense, though ontological analogy, univocity, and equivocity are based on their semantic cousins, the semantic relations are more likely derived from the ontological relations. Unfortunately, a more thorough discussion of this relation is beyond the scope of this paper.

and the nine accidents. We will call this, following Bernard Montagnes, 'predicamental analogy' and, in what follows, we will not consider it in detail. The second mode of ontological analogy has to do with the relationship between God and creation. This we will term, again following Montagnes, 'transcendental analogy'.³⁰ This second kind of analogy will lie at the center of our focus and, as we will see, it too encompasses a number of sub-types.

In the thirteenth question of the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas divides this question into twelve subordinate articles which range from discussions of whether we can use words at all to talk about God to whether "He who is" is "the most appropriate name for God."³¹ After examining the meanings of 'univocal', 'equivocal', and 'analogical' predication, in what follows, we will examine article five where he asks if "words used both of God and of creatures are used univocally or equivocally?" - and six - "given that they are in fact used analogically, are they predicated primarily of God or of creatures?"

Having argued that we can, in fact, use words to refer to God and to express who he is, and having argued, moreover, that we can even speak metaphorically about God, Aquinas wonders whether the literal terms we apply to God are predicated *univocally* or *equivocally* of him. In response, he makes a triple distinction between *univocal*,

30 Bernard Montagnes, *The Doctrine of Analogy*, 63.

31 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 3. I, 13, 11.

equivocal, and *analogical* predicates. According to its semantic usage, '*univocal*' refers to any word that has the same meaning in every instance in which it is used. For example, in every (formal) case where the word 'porcupine' is used, the word refers to a rodent with quills. Such a term is *univocal* because (whenever it is used without an article preceding it) it always refers to the same set of animals. In other words, a univocal term, taken grammatically, acts as a species, genus, or difference for all instances. Though there are many different kinds of porcupine, the term 'porcupine' refers to all and any one of them while excluding all things that lie outside of the genus/species 'porcupine'. As Aquinas states, "whatever is predicated of many things univocally is either a genus, a species, a difference, an accident, or a property"³² while, at the same time, "[e]verything . . . that is predicated univocally of many things belongs through participation to each of the things of which it is predicated; for the species is said to participate in the genus and the individual in the species."³³ Thus, every individual porcupine is *a* porcupine in that it possesses certain essential features that constitute porcupine; but no porcupine is 'porcupine' in the abstract sense.

An equivocal predicate, by contrast, is one that has at least two distinct and unrelated referents. For instance, the term 'bank' can equivocally refer to the side of a river *and* to an institution for safe-guarding and investing money. If I say "I am looking at

³² Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 32, 4.

³³ *Ibid.*, I, 32, 6.

a bank” I could be saying either “I am looking at the side of a river” or “I am looking at a building where money is exchanged/stored”. It is impossible, if my statement is heard or read in isolation, to know what I am talking about. Alternatively, if I say “I am looking at a porcupine” I *always* mean that I am looking at an animal with quills.³⁴

Analogical predication is much less clear. In addition to the distinction between 'predicamental' and 'transcendental' forms of analogy, there are, following Montagnes' critical use of Cajetan, analogies of proportion, analogies of relation, and analogies of common reference.³⁵ The first in this series – 'analogy of proportion' – is originally mathematical/geometrical in nature and, again, can be divided between *proportion* – when we say either that four is proportional to two in that four can be evenly divided into two – and *proportionality* – when we say that A is to B as C is to D. In the first case, only two terms are required; in the second case four are.³⁶ To use a non-symbolic example, when I say “a glove is to a hand as a shoe is to a foot” I am using the

34 To be sure, a porcupine can refer to a promiscuous woman but, as I stated from the outside, and for the sake of clarity, I am only using the *formal* definitions of these terms.

35 Montagnes, following Cajetan at arm's length, breaks analogy down into these three types in order to make sense of Aquinas' early, middle, and late theories. In adopting Montagnes' divisions, however, I have substituted his clumsier 'analogy by reference to a primary instance,' Montagnes, *The Doctrine of Analogy*, 68, with my own 'analogy by common reference'.

36 Thomas Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, ed. Joseph Kenny, trans. Robert Mulligan, James McGlynn, and Robert Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952-1954), Q. 2, art. 3, ad 4. “A thing is said to be proportionate to another in two ways. In one way, a proportion is noted between the two things. For example, we say that four is proportioned to two since its proportion to two is double. In the second way, they are proportioned as by a proportionality. For example, we say that six and eight are proportionate because, just as six is the double of three, so eight is the double of four; for proportionality is a similarity of proportions”; Ralph McInerney, *Aquinas and Analogy*, 22.

proportionality (as opposed to mere proportion) in which four terms are required; when I compare our Sun with KY Cygni, I am employing the form of proportional analogy in which only two terms are required. Were I, however, to state that the Sun's mass is to the Sun what KY Cygni's mass is to KY Cygni, I would then be using proportionality: the analogy of proportion with four terms.³⁷ Now, the second kind of analogy – 'analogy of relation' – occurs between any two or more entities that have some ambiguous similarity between them or some shared feature/attribute. When I say, for instance, that the Sun is like a lamp, I am employing the analogy of relation: the Sun and the lamp are analogously related because they both are characterized by the process of emitting light. Though the Sun and a lamp are, in most other respects, quite different, the fact that they share this trait of emitting light means that they can be analogously related: they are neither entirely diverse (equivocally related) nor identical (univocally related). Finally, there is the 'analogy of common reference'. This refers to terms that are related through some common third object. As Aquinas himself explains – by borrowing an Aristotelian example – the term 'healthy' can be predicated of “both a diet and a complexion because each of these has some relation to health in a man.”³⁸ In this case,

37 This is the kind of analogy that Heidegger warns against using with respect to Being in *Identity and Difference*. We cannot use the analogy of proportion, Heidegger argues, because Being is not *like* anything else. We cannot say “fruit is to apple as Being is to being” because this turns Being into something it is not: a class, category, or quasi-genus. Similarly, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger warns against comparing death to any experience. Dasein (any given human being) does not experience death in the way that it experiences driving a car. Death is absolutely singular and cannot be compared to anything.

38 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 5.

the complexion and the diet are not the *primary* referents of health; they are, rather, secondary referents while the health of a man is the primary referent. The complexion and the diet are healthy only insofar as the man they are associated with is healthy. Hence, in this kind of analogy, as opposed to the other two, there is a clear difference between the primary or principle analogue and secondary or derived analogues.³⁹ Whereas the health of a man or health considered abstractly is, in this case, the primary analogue, the health of the complexion or the diet is a secondary analogate. As we will see, the kind of analogy that Aquinas uses to express the relationship between creation and God combines aspects of both the second and third kinds of analogy described above.

In the fifth article of the thirteenth question of his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas runs through the three different ways of speaking about God in order to find the one that is most accurate. He begins with univocal predication: “[i]t is impossible to predicate anything univocally of God and creatures,”⁴⁰ that is, it is impossible to apply a single term in a single sense to both creatures and God. Just as it is inappropriate to think of God as a rock in the same way that a stone is a rock, it is also inappropriate to think of God as being strong in the same way that a fit person is strong. Why? Because, Aquinas explains, “[e]very effect that falls short of what is typical of the power of its

³⁹ Montaignes, *The Analogy of Being*, 71.

⁴⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 5.

cause represents it inadequately, for it is not the same kind of thing as the cause.”⁴¹ That is, because all of creation is related to God causally – as an effect to a cause – the attributes in the effect do not exist in the same way that they exist in the cause: “what exists simply and in a unified way in the cause will be divided up and take various different forms in such effects – as the simple power of the sun produces many different kinds of lesser things.”⁴² A fit person is not strong like God is because God is the absolute and originary source of strength – he derives his strength from no one else – while a person has a derivative kind of strength. In one case, strength exists in its most full and exemplary sense; in the other case, strength exists in a partial and derived sense – it is shared among other parts of creation. Hence, one cannot call creation *and* God both strong in the same way. The two do not have strength in a univocal sense. Moreover, Aquinas goes on, the same can be said of all other ‘perfection words’ – terms that denote something positive in an abstract (as opposed to material or embodied) sense – such as goodness, wisdom, and power.

In addition to the notion that creation differs from God as an effect from its cause, creation also differs from God in that the former is *divided* while the latter is *unified* and *whole*. When we say that God is strong, we are not just saying that God is the source and possessor of originary strength, we are also saying that in God, strength

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

is his essence. By contrast, in creation, strength, wherever it occurs, is distinct from any particular creature's essence. A lion can be strong, but strength is not part of its essence; similarly, a human being can be strong, but strength is not a part of its essence either. As Aquinas explains:

When we say that a man is wise, we signify his wisdom as something distinct from the other things about him – his essence, for example, his powers or his existence. But when we use this word about God we do not intend to signify something distinct from his essence, power or existence.⁴³

Thus, we cannot use terms for both God and creation univocally for two reasons: (1) God is the source and originary possessor of all perfection attributes, and (2) God, as opposed to creation, is indistinct from his attributes: all of his attributes are unified and indistinguishable in him.

Having assessed negatively univocal predication, Aquinas goes on to see if equivocal predication does justice to the relationship between God and creation. Once again, however, he finds that this way of using language to talk about God is insufficient:

“[A]lthough we never use words in exactly the same sense of creatures and God we are not merely equivocating when we use the same word . . . for if this were so we could never argue from statements about creatures

43 Ibid.

to statements about God – any such argument would be invalidated by the Fallacy of Equivocation.”⁴⁴

Put differently, a term such as 'bank' has two or more unrelated referents such that the only key similarity connecting the two referents is the word itself. But this is not the case with respect to such words as wisdom, strength, and power. Though the wisdom of a human being, as has already been pointed out, is not identical to the wisdom of God, it *does in fact have some similarity*, even if the similarity itself is unknown. The wisdom of a human being and the wisdom of God are not identical or even of the same class, though they are related in a way that the bank along a river and the bank in a city centre are not. Aquinas sums up aptly what we have already noted:

Any creature, in so far as it possesses any perfection, represents God and is like to him, for he, being simply and universally perfect, has pre-existing in himself the perfections of all his creatures But a creature is not like to God as it is like to another member of its species or genus, but resembles him as an effect may in some way resemble a transcendent cause although failing to reproduce perfectly the form of the cause.”⁴⁵

Thus, both univocal and equivocal predication fail to do justice to the relationship between God and creation. The only alternative left, according to Aquinas (and much of later philosophy), is *analogous* predication.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., I, 13, 2.

We have already noticed that analogical predication is quite a bit more complex than its univocal and equivocal cousins. In many cases, the term 'analogy' refers to a large number of relationships that hover somewhere between univocity and equivocity – relationships such as the three we have already outlined. The same applies to Aquinas' approach to analogy: he seems to bring up the term to describe everything that does not fall under univocity and equivocity. Even so, in his *Summa Theologiae* he divides analogy into two types. The first of these types refers to what we have already identified as analogy of common reference. However, the other type – Aquinas' analogy of relation – is altered in that in his definition there is a hierarchical relationship between the two terms. In our first articulation of analogy of relation, we did not specify an asymmetric relationship between the two terms. Aquinas, however, in his late writings, does distinguish between the created end of the analogy and the divine end.

In the following article – article six – Aquinas examines in more detail the relationship between God and creation by answering the question of whether “words [are] predicated primarily of God or of creatures.”⁴⁶ In response, he argues that words used to denote God as first cause apply primarily to creatures and only secondarily to God. When we say that 'God is a fortress', we are using the word in its secondary or creaturely sense; similarly, when we say that 'God is good' to express the idea that God is the first cause of the goodness existing in creation, we are using the term 'good' in its

⁴⁶ Ibid., I, 13, 6.

secondary or creaturely sense. This is the case because, as Aquinas states, “the word 'good' as applied to God would have contained within its meaning the goodness of the creature; and hence 'good' would apply primarily to creatures and secondarily to God.”⁴⁷ However, when we use abstract perfection words such as good, wise, and strong in their most eminent sense, we are not saying that God is the cause of these virtues, but that “he possesses [them] transcendental[ly].”⁴⁸ In such cases, then, we use the words primarily of God and secondarily of creatures: “from the point of view of what the word means it is used primarily of God and derivatively of creatures, for what the word means – the perfection it signifies – flows from God to the creatures.”⁴⁹ This analogous way of using terms, moreover, differs from metaphorical use in that, whereas analogical terms require there to be something common to both the primary and secondary referents, metaphorical terms require no such commonality. 'Good' can be analogously applied to both God and creation because both God and creation share, in some sense, goodness. However, the term 'leonine' can only be used metaphorically of both God and certain creatures because there is nothing in God that is properly leonine. As McGrath explains,

If a name predicated of God includes an essential reference to corporeal conditions . . . it is not properly but only metaphorically said of God. The

47 Ibid. Sean McGrath, in “The Logic of Indirection in Heidegger and Aquinas,” *Heythrop* 53, (2012): 1-13, calls such a term transcendent because it “participates in a transcendent meaning proper to the divine” (2).

48 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 6.

49 Ibid.

analogical divine name, by contrast, participates in a transcendent meaning proper to the divine.⁵⁰

So while metaphorical relationships do not denote a hierarchical ontological relationship between the two referents, the relation of analogy between God and creation is characterized by asymmetry: one side of the analogical relationship is the *cause* of the other side; the two elements in the relationship are not on the same plane.

Now that we have some idea of how Aquinas views analogy, univocity, and equivocity with respect to God's relationship with creation, we must consider how Aquinas views analogical, univocal, and equivocal *being*. Does he view the ontological relationship between God and creation along the same lines that he views our speech about God? In other words, does speech, for Aquinas, reflect reality? According to Ralph McInerny "terminologically speaking, there is no analogy of being in St. Thomas".⁵¹ That is, Aquinas does not explicitly make a case for *analogia entis*. Nevertheless, we need only to recall that being, for Aquinas as well as for many other Scholastics, is coextensive with the Good and the One – two other transcendentals – such that "[g]oodness and

50 McGrath, "Logic of Indirection," 2.

51 McInerny, 162. Laurence Paul Hemming makes the much more polemical claim that Aquinas is not a thinker of analogical being. In making his argument, however, Hemming, unlike McInerny, blatantly ignores a lot of scholarly work on Aquinas and analogy. For Hemming's views, see "*Analgia non Entis sed Entitatis: The Ontological Consequences of the Doctrine of Analogy*" *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6, no. 2 (2004): 122 and *Postmodernity's Transcending: Devaluing God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). For a response to Hemming's argument, see Victor Salas, "The Ontology of Analogy in Aquinas: A Response to Laurence Hemming" *Heythrop Journal* 50 (2009): 635-647.

Being are really the same.”⁵² With this in mind, because Aquinas uses the example of goodness when describing analogical predication, stating that the goodness of God is only analogically related to the goodness of creation, we can apply his doctrine of the transcendentals in order to expand his example to apply to being. Hence, we can say that God's being is analogically related to the being of creation *just as* we can say that God's goodness is analogically related to the goodness of creation. Thus, when we say that some created entity has being, we are using the term in its secondary sense. When, however, we speak of God's being, we are using the term in its original and primary sense even though our idea of being is derived from creation. Thus being, like goodness, is *analogically divided* between God and creation. In God, goodness and being exist in their most actual and full sense, whereas in any created thing, being and goodness are derived. God and creation do not exist in the same way; their beings are different, though not unrelated. With our conception of analogy now made more clear through our examination of Aquinas' texts, we can turn to the work of John Duns Scotus, the great proponent of univocal being, in order to examine an alternative approach to the relation between being, God, and creation. In what follows, we will see that Scotus endorses a more broad and conceptual understanding of univocity than does Aquinas. Though both believe that God and creation are hierarchically related, Scotus believes

⁵² Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 5, 1.

that a conceptual univocal being is necessary if we are going to talk and argue intelligibly about God.

2.2 John Duns Scotus

With John Duns Scotus' commentaries on the *Sentences*, metaphysics is said to have reached a new stage in the history of philosophy⁵³ though, as yet, there is no truly authoritative version of these commentaries. Instead, we have more than three extent versions: Scotus' *Lectura*, his *Reportatio*, and his *Ordinatio*. Whereas Scotus' *Lectura* consists of lectures he gave on the *Sentences* while at Oxford, his *Reportationes* are based on student notes taken from his lectures at Cambridge and Paris. Finally, Scotus' *Ordinatio* is the most extensive of the Subtle Doctor's commentaries on the *Sentences* and is based on his Oxford lectures though parts were updated while he was in Paris.⁵⁴ It is from these commentaries where we find Scotus' doctrine of the univocity of being most fully articulated.⁵⁵ At one point, he claims that any concept “which possesses

53 Giorgio Pini, “Univocity in Scotus's *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*: The Solution to a Riddle,” *Medioevo* 30 (2005): 70.

54 Thomas Williams, “John Duns Scotus,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, December 23, 2009, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/duns-scotus/>.

55 Allan Wolter's standard translation of Scotus' *Philosophical Writings* takes the section on the univocity of Being from Scotus' *Ordinatio* (Codex Assisii, 137) commentary. But because Scotus abandoned his

sufficient unity in itself, so that to affirm and deny it of one and the same thing would be a contradiction” is univocal.⁵⁶ By saying this, Scotus is largely in agreement with Aquinas.⁵⁷ For Aquinas, as we have seen, a term is univocal when it has a single referent; that is, whenever it applies to the same set of objects in every case in which it is used. Likewise, for Scotus, a concept is univocal when it makes a contradiction possible. So, for instance, the statement “I did and did not walk to a bank today” can be true if we take 'bank' in its most general sense: in one case, it can refer to the institution where I keep my money and in another case, it can refer to the side of a river. If, on a certain day, I walked to the side of a river but did not walk to a institution for keeping money on that same day, the above statement would be true even though, at first sight, it seems to affirm and deny the same thing. This, however, cannot be said about the statement “I

Ordinatio when he left Paris, we can only say that the doctrine of univocity therein expresses the view he maintained during the middle of his career. For generally helpful and recent expositions of Scotus' doctrine of univocity, see Peter King, “Scotus on Metaphysics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15-68; Mary Beth Ingham and Mechthild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus: An Introduction* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 38-51; Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-39; Alexander Hall, *Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus: Natural Theology in the High Middle Ages* (New York: Continuum, 2007). For an older but nevertheless thorough account of Scotus' doctrine of univocity see Cyril Schircel, *The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Philosophy of John Duns Scotus: A Dissertation* (Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, 2011).

56 John Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings: A Selection*, trans. Allan Wolter (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 23. See also John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* Book I, distinction 3. The Latin for this sentence as well as for what follows is, “conceptum univocum dico, qui ita est unus, quod eius unitas sufficit ad contradictionem, affirmando, & negando ipsum de eodem. Sufficit etiam pro medio Syllogistico, ut extrema unita in medio sic uno, sine fallacia aequiuocationis, concludantur inter se unum” John Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 5, no. 1 ed. Luke Wadding (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), 392.

57 A key distinction between Scotus and Aquinas' understandings of univocity and analogy is that, according to Aquinas, both univocal and analogous terms can be used in syllogisms while for Scotus, only univocal concepts can.

both touched and did not touch a porcupine's back today." Provided that we keep our concept of porcupine general enough to refer to all living and non-living porcupines as well as real and fake ones, the above statement cannot be true in any case. This is because our concept of porcupine has only one possible referent: a rodent with quills. Scotus, were he to comment on these examples, would call the concept of a porcupine univocal because "to affirm and deny it of one and the same thing would" bring about a contradiction. Now, the general concept of a bank is equivocal because it has at least two unrelated definitions, the concept *can* be univocal insofar as we stipulate or assume it to refer only to something more specific. Hence, provided that we know or assume beforehand that I am *only* talking about the side of a river when I talk about a bank, then the statement "I did and did not walk to a bank today" would be false.

After affirming that univocal concepts are those that make contradiction possible, Scotus goes on to state that every univocal concept

[A]lso has sufficient unity to serve as the middle term of a syllogism, so that wherever two extremes are united by a middle term that is one in this way, we may conclude to the union of the two extremes among themselves [that is, the syllogism does not fall prey to the fallacy of equivocation].⁵⁸

The fallacy of equivocation occurs within a syllogism when the middle term – the term that connects the first and second premises – refers to something different in each case.

⁵⁸ Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, 23; *Ordinatio*, Book I, distinction 3.

Referring again to the contrast between the concept of a porcupine and the concept of a bank, consider the following syllogism:

1. All banks are institutions where money is stored.
2. The edge of a river is a bank.
3. The edge of a river is an institution where money is stored.

This syllogism is invalid because 'bank' is used in an equivocal sense. In the first premise, we are referring to the institution; in the second premise, we are referring to the side of a river. Hence, the conclusion is false because it is based on two unrelated definitions of bank. In order to have a valid syllogism, we must use the same concept of bank in each of the first two premises. Hence the following syllogism

1. All banks are institutions where money is stored.
2. CIBC is the name of a bank.
3. CIBC is the name of an institution where money is stored.

is valid because it employs a univocal concept of bank.

Now that we have some idea of what Scotus means by univocity, what does this entail for the question of univocal being? It entails, first of all, that the concept of being

we are dealing with refers to the same thing in every case in which it is used: since being applies univocally to both God and creation, both God and creation have the same being, though this being is *conceptual* (pertaining solely to thought) and not *ontological* (pertaining to what really exists beyond mere thought). Scotus accepts that there is a real or ontological difference between God and creation but, with respect to concepts, both fall under the same concept of being. Nevertheless, even this concept is modally divided between infinite and finite being though this formal/modal distinction is *subordinate* to the more original conceptual unity between the two. So, just as the statement “I did and did not walk to a bank today” can be true or false depending on how broad a definition of bank we use, the statement “God and creation have the same being” is true or false depending on what we mean by being. Because Scotus restricts his understanding of being to conceptual being, both God and creation have the same being. If, however, we are talking in terms of reality and understand by being 'reality' then Scotus would not consent to the statement. Though he believes that God and creation have the same conceptual being, albeit in different modes, he does not maintain that God and creation have the same reality: he would agree with Aquinas that they remain hierarchically related. As a result, Scotus' concept of being is much broader than that of Aquinas – it encompasses more – though, because both believe that God is the cause of creation, Scotus' concept of being is thinner than Aquinas': for Scotus, univocal being is *conceptual* while for Aquinas analogical being, I argue, says something

about the *ontological* relationship between God and creation. In sum, then, Aquinas' and Scotus' concepts of univocal being differ: whereas the former takes the possibility of univocal being to have ontological or real consequences, the latter does not.

Now, in addition to this, Scotus holds that being is the primary object of the human intellect. Knowledge of anything is based on whether that thing is included in the realm of being. That is, anything that falls outside of the domain of being is unknowable because there is nothing there to be known while everything that falls within the domain of being is knowable by the human intellect in either this life or in the next one: being is the condition for the possibility of something being knowable: “[p]rior to logic, being is the foundational and necessary concept for any cognitional act, the horizon within which knowing inscribes itself.”⁵⁹ Just as colour is the proper object of sight such that anything that falls within the domain of colour can be seen while anything that falls outside of the domain of colour cannot, being forms the domain outside of which nothing can be known. As Cyril Shircel explains, “[*b*eing . . . [is] that through which all other things are known, just as it is through the common ratio of color that *white* and *black* are known by the sense of sight.”⁶⁰ So, if the human intellect is to know the existence of God, God *must* fall within this domain of being: “[s]ince *being* is the natural

59 Mary Beth Ingham and Mechthild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus: An Introduction* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 39. See also Robert Pasnau “Cognition,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, edited by Thomas Williams (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 285-311.

60 Schircel, 49.

object of the intellect whatever can be resolved into *being* and whatever reveals an aspect of *being* can be known by the intellect – naturally. Hence God, Who is likewise *Being*, can also be known – naturally.”⁶¹

Since being provides the limits of what can be known, God must fall within the same domain of being as creation. Were he not to fall within the same domain, it would be impossible to prove his existence or to know him either in this life or in the next. In the first argument for univocity, Scotus begins with the claim that uncertainty about an attribute or mode does not entail uncertainty about the underlying subject of the attribute or mode: “Every intellect that is certain about one concept, but dubious about others has, in addition to the concepts about which it is in doubt, another concept of which it is certain.”⁶² With respect to God, we can be certain that God exists or has being even though we are uncertain as to whether his mode of being is infinite or finite. That is, just because we may doubt the modality of God’s being, does not mean that we doubt that God falls within the domain of being: “a man can be certain in his mind that

61 Ibid., 50.

62 Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, 23. The Latin reads, “omnis intellectus certus de uno conceptu, & dubius de diuersis, habet conceptum de quo est certus, alium a conceptibus, de quibus est dubius: sed subiectum includit praedicatum, & intellectus viatoris potest esse certus de aliquo, quod sit ens, dubitando de ante dinito, vel infinito, creato, vel increato: ergo conceptus entis de aliquo est alius a conceptu isto, vel illo, & ita neuter ex se; sed in utroque illorum includitur: ergo univocus.” *Opera Omnia*, vol. 5, no. 2, 392.

God is a being and still be in doubt whether He is a finite or an infinite being, a created or an uncreated being.”⁶³ This argument can be outlined as follows:

- (1) An intellect cannot be both certain and uncertain about the same concept.
- (2) For every intellect that is certain about one concept (X) but uncertain about another (Y), that intellect is certain about at least one concept (X).
- (3) The first-principle (God) is a being. (based on the conclusions of philosophers)
- (4) The nature of the first principle is not self-evident. (based on the disagreement of philosophers)
- (5) For every intellect that is certain that the first principle (God) is a being (X) but uncertain about the nature of the first being (Y), that intellect is certain that the first principle (God) is a being (X).

Though this reconstruction seems to indicate that Scotus’s first argument for the univocity of being merely asserts that God is a being, it does much more than that. In fact, by arguing that God is a being, Scotus is claiming that the concept of God’s being is the same as the concept of the being of a created thing. This is the case because many earlier philosophers have asserted that if the first principle is fire – a warm being – then it has a *different kind of being* than water – a cold being. By making this claim, these philosophers have assumed that the attributes (accidentals, incidents) of a being *change the fundamental nature of the being*. But, as Scotus explains, “if you say that “man” is one concept applicable to both Socrates and Plato, some one will deny it, asserting that

63 Ibid.

there are two concepts, but they seem to be one because of their great similarity.”⁶⁴

Likewise, some will assert that infinite being is very similar though not identical, in being, with finite being.⁶⁵ Scotus, by contrast, argues that the finite and infinite modes of being do not change the concept of being; if being in its finite mode differs conceptually from being in its infinite mode, then the two kinds of being are not similar but radically different:

[E]ither these two concepts [of being] are conceived as opposed to each other . . . [o]r they are compared according to analogy, or according to similarity or distinction, in which case they are conceived as distinct either prior to or simultaneously with the comparison, and therefore they are not perceived as one concept.⁶⁶

In his third argument, Scotus claims that we cannot have merely analogous knowledge of God because analogous knowledge of God *presupposes* or is only possible because of a more fundamental univocal knowledge of God. Since the very structure of analogy *requires* that we be familiar with both the subject of the analogy (the primary

64 Ibid., 24.

65 This is, generally speaking, Henry of Ghent's view: the being of God is so similar to the being of creatures that we confuse the two concepts of being, supposing them to be identical when, in fact, they are not. For more on Henry of Ghent, see Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa: The Questions on God's Existence and Essence, (Articles 21-24)*, trans. Jos Decorte and Roland Teske (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005); Jos Decorte, "Henry of Ghent on Analogy: Critical Reflexions on Jean Paulus' Interpretation," in *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of his Death (1293)*, ed. W. Vanhamel (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 71-106.

66 Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, 24-25.

meaning) and the analogous predication, we would have to have already an accurate conception of God *in order to* make analogous statements about him. When, for instance, we analogously claim that a flower breathes, we have to *be familiar already* with flowers – we have to already know that they do not breathe – in order to realize that this statement contains an analogous predication of a flower as well as to know just how the analogy applies to the flower. If all we know about a flower is that it breathes, we would have no way of knowing what this statement means. However, because, in fact, we already know that a flower does not breathe, when hearing that ‘this flower breathes,’ we can take the statement to mean that the flower smells nice. Now, with respect to God, if our only knowledge of him is through analogous statements, we must already know the concept of God against which to understand the analogies. However, the Trinity and other articles of faith demonstrate that we do not have a proper concept of God – that we do not know him accurately as he is in himself. And so, the fact that we do know that God exists through natural knowledge (rather than revelation) demonstrates that we must derive our knowledge of God from a concept of being that comes from elsewhere (creation). Hence, we either (1) have no knowledge of God or (2) have some more fundamental univocal though conceptual knowledge of the being of God. Since we do know naturally that God exists, Scotus takes the latter position.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Ibid., 26-27.

Many commentators, from Deleuze to Catherine Pickstock have pitted Scotus' concept of being *against* Aquinas' notion of the same. In each case, they state that Scotus has made a claim about reality when asserting that being is univocal. In other words, they take Scotus as having said something about the way being *really* is. Though this mis-interpretation is easy to make, we must be careful not take Scotus' theory of univocity as saying something about the real relation between God and being.⁶⁸ Through the doctrine of univocity, Scotus is, on the contrary, dealing with the *epistemological* relation between God and creation; that is, Scotus is dealing with how we can know God and not with how God and creation are actually related. While Henry of Ghent and Aquinas, following a more thirteenth-century French tradition, try to form their concepts and language to match reality, Scotus, following a more English tradition, develops his concept of univocal being in order to accord with our manner of knowing.⁶⁹ If Henry and Aquinas prioritize what is real or what is really existing by trying to align language with what exists, Scotus tries to align language with how we think or how we come to know. As Shircel clarifies,

For St. Thomas *being* designates what has been abstracted from the material; for Duns Scotus *being* . . . designates the object of abstraction and intuition. When, therefore, we speak . . . of the analogy of St. Thomas

68 Thomas Williams claims that the "insistence on a distinction between semantics and ontology is absolutely crucial to Scotus' account of univocity, and every reliable interpreter notes it," Thomas Williams, "The Doctrine of Univocity," 577.

69 Giorgio Pini, "Univocity in Scotus's *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*," 9-11.

and of the univocity of the Subtle Doctor, we no longer are speaking of the same thing.⁷⁰

And as Richard Cross warns, “[t]he basic difference [between Scotus and Aquinas] is that Scotus holds *being* to be a vicious abstraction, where Aquinas has it as a real extramental property of things.”⁷¹ Thus, Scotus uses being in a more *semantic* or *epistemological* sense whereas Aquinas employs the term in a more *ontological* or *real* sense. When interpreting or comparing the two thinkers, we *must* not make the mistake of thinking that they understand the univocity of being in the same way.⁷²

2.3 Univocity and Atheism

From our study so far, we can easily observe how closely tied the question of univocal and analogical being is with the question of God. For Aquinas, we must use our language to accurately reflect the reality of God while, for Duns Scotus, we must articulate being

70 Shircel, 69.

71 Cross, “Where Angels Fear to Tread,” 19.

72 Early in his career, Scotus asserts that being is analogical for the metaphysician and equivocal for the logician. He only seems to endorse univocity after moving to Paris. This shift in attitude can be attributed to the difference between the schools in Paris and Oxford. Whereas philosophers at Oxford tended to make a distinction between the domain of language and the domain of reality, the Parisians, such as Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent as well as the later modists, tended to connect the two domains. For more on Scotus' various theories of being and how they fit together, see Giorgio Pini, “Univocity in Scotus's *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*.” Again, Ingham and Dryer state that “the position in favor of the univocity of being does not entail that this concept contains the proper and specific content within which God is understood,” *Philosophical Vision*, 45.

so as to show how natural proofs for God are possible. There arises, then, from the controversy, at least two theological groups: (1) those who (a) believe that proofs for God do not rely on a univocal concept of being and (b) claim that all discourse about God necessarily requires analogical language and (2) those who maintain that we cannot prove God's existence without some underlying and unifying concept. In the years following Scotus, however, there arose a third group, a group consisting of those who maintain that being can be thought *outside of any consideration of the divine*; that is, that being can be thought *immanently* and not *transcendentally*. For the members of the third group, the Scotistic difference between finite and infinite being is unnecessary or superfluous because being encompasses all that is: finitude and infinitude *both take place within being*. According to the members of this third group, the first step towards an immanent ontology is Scotus' rejection of analogical being; the second step, however, is the conflation of infinite and finite being. As a result, they deny the transcendence that comes with analogical being in favour of the immanence that they perceive to be derivable from (a modified understanding of) univocal being. Members of this third group – Spinoza, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Deleuze – claim that there is nothing outside of the whole of being; there is no absolute transcendence, no analogically related Other in whom the primary meaning of being rests. Between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries, a shift took place over the question of the analogy or univocity of being. What initially was a largely theological/semantic/logical problem became a very secularized

philosophical problem whereby the analogy of being became associated with transcendence and the univocity of being with materialistic immanence.

2.4 Gilles Deleuze

The most explicit proponent of the third view is unquestionably Gilles Deleuze, a late twentieth-century French philosopher who, until recently, has been overshadowed by his contemporaries, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Fundamental to Deleuze's work and alignment with Nietzsche is a *reaction against* 'Platonism', that is, a reaction against all attempts to prioritize a ground over its representations and images or identity over difference. In his early work, *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze highlights and criticizes two distinctions and four illusions that support this structure of Platonism. The distinctions are those "between the model and the copy"⁷³ and those "between the copy itself and the phantasm,"⁷⁴ while the illusions involve "representing [and subordinating] difference through the identity of the concept and the thinking subject,"⁷⁵ the canceling of "difference . . . in the quality which covers it,"⁷⁶ the subordination of

73 Deleuze, 264.

74 Ibid., 265.

75 Ibid., 266.

76 Ibid.

“difference to itself, in the form of both limitation and opposition,”⁷⁷ and, finally, “the subordination of difference to the analogy of judgement.”⁷⁸ Put together, these two Platonic distinctions and four illusions serve to prioritize the same over the different, the ground over the image. And, moreover, as the distinctions and third and fourth illusions show, difference in Platonism is constructed hierarchically: the model is prioritized over the copy which is, in turn, of more value than the phantasm. In the same way, negativity subordinates and delimits difference by cutting it off, leaving limits, boundaries, and hierarchies. Finally, analogous judgments uphold the Platonic preference for the same because they involve asymmetrical *relations*, that is, *hierarchies between different judged or assessed objects*. This, in turn, leads to onto-theology because, with analogy, one being is placed in a central relationship with respect to all others. Whether this central being is God, the State, or Truth, whenever an ontology is analogically constructed, all secondary beings derive their significance and meaning *only through the primary analogate*. Hence, for Deleuze, the analogical ontologies of Aquinas and Henry of Ghent exemplify onto-theological thinking to the highest degree.

Thus, in order to overthrow such Platonic distinctions and illusions (such as Aquinas' and Henry of Ghent's), Deleuze strongly advocates (a missinterpretation of) Duns Scotus' doctrine of univocal being. Near the beginning of *Difference and*

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., 269.

Repetition, he asserts that “[t]here has only ever been one ontological proposition: being is univocal. There has only ever been one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gave being a single voice.”⁷⁹ Through these laudatory remarks, Deleuze reveals the importance that univocal being has for his metaphysics; without univocal being, Platonism is allegedly upheld. But why the univocity of being? Would not univocity, as Alain Badiou argues, promote and uphold the same instead of demolishing the Platonic desire for a founding/fundamental ground? Is not univocity synonymous with the priority of the one and unity whereas analogy preserves fundamental difference? Clarifying himself, Deleuze asserts that “being . . . insofar as it expresses itself, is said in turn *in a single and same sense* of all the numerically distinct designators and expressors,”⁸⁰ that is, far from asserting *merely* that being itself is said in a singular sense, Deleuze claims that *all things have the same being and the same sense of being*. The Platonic preference for a foundation is circumvented through the *absence of a ground* and the *presence of the same being in all existents*. Thus, Deleuze prefers univocal over analogical being because the former, by spreading itself out among a multitude of things, leaves *no room for hierarchies*, onto-theology, and the *oppression of the same*:

The words 'everything is equal' may . . . resound joyfully, on condition that they are said *of* that which is not equal in this equal, univocal

79 Ibid., 35.

80 Ibid.

being Univocity of being thus also signifies equality of being. Univocal Being is at one and the same time nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy.⁸¹

Deleuze, therefore, takes univocity of being to mean the *spreading out of being among all things* such that *no one thing is prioritized to the marginalization of another*. No being or domain of being is more important than any other being or domain of being. So, far from signifying the unity of all things under the One or a common ground, univocity signifies the *anarchy* or *equality* of all things.

But, we may still ask, if the same being is spread out among all existents, how does one existent differ from another? How does, for instance, an apple differ from an orange if both are composed of the same being? In response to this problem, Deleuze turns to Spinoza who, in Deleuze's view, advances the doctrine of univocity in terms of substance monism. Spinoza solves the problem of difference and univocity through his reliance on *quantitative* as opposed to *qualitative* differences. The former takes difference as arising not through inherently different attributes, but through the intensity or quantity with which such existents exhibit being. That is, each existent differs from another not through some fundamental or *essential* difference as an apple differs from an orange because their essences differ, but through the intensity with which each existent affects sensation: “[b]eing itself is said in a single unique sense of

⁸¹ Ibid., 37.

substance and the modes, even though the modes and substance do not have the same sense or do not have that being in the same manner.”⁸² In other words, apples do not differ from oranges because their (stable) essences are different or because they possess different accidents or attributes; apples and oranges differ because they affect the faculties of sensation with varying intensities.

Furthermore, Deleuze resolves the problem of the *difference* between being and existents or, as Heidegger terms it, the ontic-ontological difference by thinking being as such as an *immanent* cause as opposed to a transcendent or emanative cause. In other words, for Deleuze, all existents are *within* being in the same way that *being is within being*: “[t]he effect . . . remains in its cause no less than the cause remains in itself”⁸³ such that “not only is Being equal in itself, it is equally and immediately present in all beings, without mediation or intermediary.”⁸⁴ This is to say that being does not stand outside of beings as a transcendent or emanative cause stands outside of its effects and produces a hierarchy through its priority over its effects. Rather, by being an immanent cause to itself, being simultaneously inhabits and is inhabited by beings. Being is not a ground or ab-ground; nor is there an ontico-ontological hierarchy. Being, as an immanent cause, is indistinguishable from its effects: being is its effects.

82 Ibid., 40.

83 Daniel Smith, 174.

84 Ibid.

From this very brief overview of Deleuze's philosophy of univocal being, it is very easy to see how far Deleuze departs from the medieval debates surrounding the subject. For one, Deleuze appropriates Duns Scotus' concept of univocal being *as if it applies to being itself*, whereas, as we have already seen, univocal being, for Scotus, serves merely as an epistemological or conceptual tool and not as an accurate or reliable description of reality. In addition to his missappropriation of Scotus, Deleuze modifies the doctrine of univocity such that it becomes synonymous with *immanence* and *anarchy* by making it clear that being, for him, *is not separate from its effects*. There is no transcendent God or cause who exists on a plane higher than all created or effected things. Everything in Deleuze's ontology *exists on the same plane*, though with differing degrees of intensity. It could be said, then, that Deleuze takes Scotus' version of univocity, applies it to being itself, and removes the modal distinction between infinitude and finitude by prioritizing the latter. Thus, Deleuze's version is unique because it appropriates univocity for the cause of atheism and materialism. No longer is univocity an epistemological tool to be used in order to prove the existence of God; univocity, in Deleuze's hands, signifies pure immanence, anarchy, and the equality of all beings. By advancing this thesis, Deleuze places himself in the third camp composed of those who endorse an immanent ontology and univocal predication.

2.5 Radical Orthodoxy

Our final version of the univocity/analogy/equivocity distinction comes from the relatively recent Radical Orthodoxy movement. Formally initiated in 1999 with the publication of *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, the movement extends its roots as far back as 1990 with the publication of John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*. Part of Radical Orthodox's agenda is to critique prevailing secular (and largely twentieth-century Continental) ideologies in the name of orthodox Christian theology. As the writers of the introduction of *Radical Orthodoxy* explain:

The present collection of essays attempts to reclaim the world by situating its concerns and activities within a theological framework. Not simply returning in nostalgia to the premodern, it visits sites in which secularism has invested heavily – aesthetics, politics, sex, the body, personhood, visibility, space – and resituates them from a Christian standpoint: that is in terms of the Trinity, Christology, the Church and the Eucharist.⁸⁵

But neither is Radical Orthodoxy merely a Christian reaction to secular philosophy or a Christian appropriation of non- or anti-Christian principles. Rather, as the leaders of the movement explain further, philosophy is only coherent when it is accompanied by an *appreciation of the significance of the Trinity, the Eucharist, and the Body of Christ*: “[u]nderpinning the present essays . . . is the idea that every discipline must be framed by a theological perspective; otherwise these disciplines will define a zone apart from

85 John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, “Suspending the Material: The Turn of Radical Orthodoxy,” in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward (New York: Routledge, 1999), 1.

God, grounded literally in nothing.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, central to Radical Orthodoxy’s project is the commitment to the Platonic doctrine of participation: all things derive their significance and meaning through their analogical *participation* in the Divine. This analogical way of conceiving being and the world is *directly opposed to Deleuzian immanentism*; namely, the claim that there is no ontological hierarchy or divine guarantor of meaning. Hence, against Deleuze and other advocates of secular materialism, Radical Orthodox theologians trace the origins of the divide between secular or neutral philosophy and theology to Scotus’ articulation of the univocity of being. In other words, these theologians attribute the apparent neutrality of modernity and secularism to Scotus’ all-encompassing notion of univocal being. So, rather than offering its own new conception of univocity or analogy, Radical Orthodoxy offers us a critique of prevailing interpretations of univocity and analogy.⁸⁷

In what is perhaps the strongest and most popular and criticized case against Scotus, Catherine Pickstock argues in “Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance” that the Subtle Doctor marks the beginning of a movement *away from hierarchy* and towards the *leveling off that characterizes modernity* when he flattens the distinction between infinite and finite being. She states that “being [after Scotus] can

86 *Ibid.*, 3.

87 Oddly enough, rather than challenging Deleuze’s interpretation of Scotus, Radical Orthodoxy seems to accept it in order to criticize it. As a result, their railings against Scotus are, more accurately, railings against Deleuze. The problem with this, however, is that Deleuze did not write during the pre-Reformation era and so his philosophy cannot be taken as an origin of so-called secular modernity.

now be regarded as . . . transcendentally prior to, and also common to both God and creatures.”⁸⁸ This ontological leveling not only suppresses the importance of recognizing the divine transcendence that Aquinas and Henry of Ghent respect, but it also suggests that finite beings can subsist on their own and without the aid of the divine influence or revelation that both Neoplatonism and earlier medieval thinkers thought necessary: “[F]inite being,” Pickstock asserts, “is now regarded as possessing in essence “being” in its own right (even though it still requires an infinite cause).”⁸⁹ After Scotus, it only takes the easy elimination of the infinite being and the pure affirmation of finite being to end up with a Deleuzian and largely postmodern ontology of immanence. For this reason, “Scotus opens up the possibility of considering being without God.”⁹⁰ This allows for the subsequent division between reason and revelation: “[O]nce the perceived relationship to the transcendental has undergone the shift described above, to abstract to the Good tells us nothing concerning the divine nature.”⁹¹ Hence the univocity of being has both ontological *and* epistemological consequences: its consequences are ontological insofar as it marginalizes the importance of the God-creature hierarchy; its consequences are epistemological to the extent that beings or entities can now be known without reference to the divine. As we saw in Aquinas’ articulation, the meaning of being has its

88 Catherine Pickstock, “Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance,” in *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, ed. John Milbank and Simon Oliver (New York: Routledge, 2009), 120.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid., 121.

91 Ibid., 121.

original reference in God; for Scotus, all beings, and therefore the being of created things as much as the being of God, can be known *outside of* and *before God*. Hence, in Aquinas' schema, knowledge of God is critical for knowledge of creation; for Scotus, by contrast, knowledge of the being of creation or nature can be gleaned *without reference to God*. With Scotus, then, our epistemological reliance on God vanishes and we are left with the possibility of *neutral* or *atheistic* science: science or knowledge that is neutral with respect to God.

In addition to these claims about post-Scotistic ontology and epistemology, Pickstock also asserts that Scotus makes onto-theology possible. With Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and other pre-Scotistic thinkers, God is transcendent and not subordinate to anything. Our very notion of being, for instance, has its primary referent in God. With Scotus, however, God becomes subordinate to being such that Heidegger's observations about the conjunction of ontology and theology, the conjunction of the most general ground – in Scotus' case univocal being – and the first or highest cause – God for Scotus – are realized. Aquinas' metaphysics of analogy, on the other hand, avoids onto-theology because, as John Milbank explains, Aquinas *does not subordinate knowledge of God to knowledge of being*: Aquinas is a thinker of “theoontology, not ontotheology, for, in order to comprehend this archetype [the first cause], it did not need first to be situated

in a 'general discourse' about being, essence and substance, indifferent to finite and infinite, as later articulated by Scotus."⁹²

2.6 Various Univocities

What, then, can we conclude from our investigations into these contrasting appraisals of univocity? For Aquinas, univocal predication across creation and God suggests that both God and creation exist on the same ontological plane *in reality*. In Scotus, by contrast, univocal being is merely a noetic tool for constructing logically valid arguments for the existence of God. Thirdly, for both Deleuze and Radical Orthodox theologians, univocal being refers to the ontological commitment that all beings exist on the same plane. The difference between Deleuze and Pickstock lies in how they assess the consequences of univocal being. Hence, we are left with three or four views that, despite their differences, can be classified as either transcendent (Aquinas, Scotus, Pickstock) or immanent (Deleuze) depending on where they place God in relation to being. Moreover, though Deleuze claims to follow Scotus, the two, in fact, have quite different ontologies. Whereas Deleuze takes being to be univocal in reality, Scotus takes univocity to have implications only in the conceptual realm. And whereas Deleuze's ontology is avowedly

⁹² John Milbank, "Truth and Vision," in *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, ed. John Milbank and Simon Oliver (New York: Routledge, 2009), 85.

atheistic, Scotus conceives God as an infinite being with a voluntary will. Deleuze, by contrast, has no such notion of God.

Chapter 3

Heidegger

Turning, then, to Heidegger, we can ask the same question of work: is his ontology hospitable to immanence or transcendence? There is no easy response. As we will see, we cannot justifiably call Heidegger's ontology either fully immanent or fully transcendent. In one sense, Heidegger *does* endorse immanence: being *does* encompass all beings. Nothing exists that does not have being because being is common to all things. Nevertheless, throughout his career, he remains adamantly opposed to bringing God into philosophy and into the domain of being as such. Hence, there remains in his thought a tension between wanting to bring everything into the domain of being while keeping God out. As a result, Heidegger ends up with an ontology that exists somewhere between Scotus' and Deleuze's: for Heidegger, there is no infinite being but the divine can, at his own discretion, reveal himself to those open to him through faith. In order to see this tension in Heidegger's ontology at work, we will now leave our study of historical interpretations of the analogical/univocal distinction in order to turn our gaze to Heidegger's own works. In what follows, we will first look at how Heidegger endorses univocity. In this section we will see that Heidegger understands and articulates his notion of being in a way that strongly suggests univocity. In the following section, we will examine how Heidegger's early articulation of the Dasein/non-Dasein distinction

supports an understanding of analogical being. And yet, though Dasein's relation to non-Dasein entities and being suggests analogy, these analogous relations remain subordinate to Heidegger's more general understanding of univocal being. Finally, in the third section, we will turn towards Heidegger's understanding of equivocal being. In what follows, we will see that Heidegger does not understand being equivocally; rather, for him, the relationship between God and being is univocal. We will conclude this section by noting the tension that exists between Heidegger's desire to unify all entities under being and his insistence that God is outside of philosophy and the domain of being. Hence, in the end, we will find that Heidegger is a clever thinker of both immanence and transcendence: he endorses immanence insofar as being is concerned but he supports transcendence with respect to the more general relationship between being and God. As a result, Heidegger constructs a novel way of understanding the immanent/transcendent dialectic and, in doing so, provocatively combines univocity, analogy, and equivocity in his ontology.

3.1 *Univocity*

In the introduction to this thesis, we noticed that Heidegger pursues one thinking of being to the marginalization of other competing thinkings of being. That is, Heidegger asks what the (singular) meaning of (singular) being is and, in doing so, displays a certain

preference for univocal, as opposed to analogical or equivocal, being. Now that we have looked at several historical and contemporary understandings and evaluations of univocity, we are in a much better position to examine Heidegger's initial decision, in *Being and Time*, to prioritize univocity and we are in a much better position to situate Heidegger's understanding of being in relation to Aquinas', Scotus', Deleuze's, and Radical Orthodoxy's ontologies. Throughout this section on univocity, I will argue that Heidegger endorses a univocal conception of being because, for him, being is both *universal* and *united*. In order to make this argument, we will first look at *Being and Time* to show that being is universal: it undergirds all of the more particular, ontic domains. After looking at *Being and Time*, we will turn our attention to *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* to see how Heidegger conceives of being as unified.

3.1.1 *Being and Time*

Heidegger enters the question of the meaning of being in *Being and Time* by bringing to light three common prejudices – being is universal, indefinable, and self-evident – that have long divided ontologists. Of these three prejudices, the first corresponds nicely with univocity. Insofar as being is universal in the sense implied here, it is univocal; insofar as being is univocal, it is universal. According to Heidegger, many thinkers throughout the history of philosophy have used the universality of being as an excuse to

avoid investigating the meaning of being. For them,⁹³ being is “the 'most universal' concept” (it is a transcendental, higher than both species and genera) and, as a result, needs no further clarification.⁹⁴ Defined as 'the most universal concept', being resists investigation: why should we re-consider a concept whose meaning everyone knows? “In this way,” Heidegger goes on, “that which the ancient philosophers found continually disturbing as something obscure and hidden has taken on a clarity and self-evidence such that if anyone continues to ask about it he is charged with an error of method.”⁹⁵ Against these ontologists, Heidegger does not deny that being is universal but asserts, on the contrary, that “if it is said that 'being' is the most universal concept, this cannot mean that it is the one which is clearest or that it needs no further discussion. It is rather the darkest of all.”⁹⁶ The universality of being should not close off investigation, as it has done throughout history; on the contrary, it ought to encourage investigation, for the universality of being across a large spectrum implies that any science of being would have significant consequences for anything falling within its spectrum or domain.

The universality of being reveals itself in the way that being undergirds and unifies all beings as an ontological quasi-ground. Whereas the ontic domain – the domain of particular beings or entities – is divided between competing domains of

93 Heidegger includes both Aquinas and Scotus among them.

94 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H3.

95 Ibid., H2.

96 Ibid., H3.

objects, the domain of being as such, as a quasi-ground, lies beneath them all as a unifying factor. The nature of the sciences clearly reveals this dialectic existing between being and beings, the ontological and ontic domains: mathematics, for instance, examines one domain of being while biology and theology study other domains. Whereas mathematics studies relations between quantities, theology studies faith as it manifests itself in the world. As ontic sciences, they are clearly distinct and have very little if not nothing to do with each other. And yet, Heidegger maintains, these seemingly unrelated sciences are related to each other through their common grounding in being. In other words, though theology, biology, mathematics, and other ontic sciences may be concerned with different phenomena, the very phenomena they study is united through being. Beneath the domain of theology, the domain of mathematics, and the domain of biology lies ontology. Being is *common* to all of the sciences, from mathematics to psychology to theology. And so, for any of the ontic sciences to be possible, an understanding of being must be presupposed. Hence, just as mathematics is more fundamental than physics and physics more fundamental than engineering, any conceptual clarification, examination, or analysis of the ontological domain – the domain of being – is necessarily more fundamental than any of the ontic sciences:⁹⁷

“[o]ntological inquiry is indeed more primordial, as over against the ontical inquiry of

97 We must recognize when making this analogy, that engineering, mathematics, and physics are all ontic sciences while ontology or philosophy is an ontological science. Hence, the analogy does not obtain in every respect.

the positive sciences.”⁹⁸ As a result, we ought to regard ontological research as being more important than is commonly thought for it lays out possibilities and directions for the ontic sciences.

Hence, Heidegger's implicit view that being is univocal shows itself in the way he takes being to be related to beings. Nothing⁹⁹ exists outside being because being delimits the realm of all that can be said to be studied and considered. So, just as being, for Scotus, delimits what can be thought and cognized, being, for Heidegger, encompasses everything towards which Dasein can comport itself. Being is universal because it encompasses all beings. This is distinct from Aquinas' view which maintains that being is *not* universal. Whereas, for Aquinas, the being of created things is derived from the being of God, for Heidegger, no such relation obtains. There is no being in whom being exists, so to speak, primarily. Rather, being even encompasses all beings universally.¹⁰⁰

98 Ibid., H11.

99 The one exception to this is, as we will see in the section on equivocality, God.

100 This is, of course, not to ignore Dasein's important role in possessing a pre-understanding of Being. I am, rather, just talking about Being's strict relation to beings in Heidegger's ontology, not ontic difference between Dasein and all non-Dasein entities. For more on Dasein's relation to non-Dasein entities, see the section on analogy below.

3.1.2 *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*

Just as we find that being is *universal* in *Being and Time*, we discover that being is *unified* in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Given in the same year in which *Being and Time* was published, the first part of the lectures constituting *The Basic Problems* deals with four central problems of ontology in the history of philosophy: Kant's claim that being is not a real predicate, the medieval distinction between *essence* and *existence*, the Cartesian distinction between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, and the modern problem of the copula or 'is'. Heidegger explains the unity of being most clearly in the third of these sections in which he deals with the traditional mind/body distinction.

The section on the difference between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* begins by articulating the problem and relating it to the two preceding chapters. *Res extensa* denotes, for much of modern philosophy, matter, the world, or the object, that is, all that is not *thought* and all that exists outside of the mind. *Res cogitans*, by contrast, traditionally refers to thought, mind, and the subject. This distinction between extended thing and thinking thing or between the subject and the object is hugely important because it has guided philosophy from Descartes to Husserl: "[It] pervades all the problems of modern philosophy and even extends into the development of

contemporary phenomenology.”¹⁰¹ And yet, Heidegger goes on, no one has accurately sought the connection between these two kinds of being. Hence, “[t]he question of the unity of the concept of being becomes all the more pressing in the face of these two diversities of being.”¹⁰² In other words, the problem of the unity of being is fundamentally the problem of the unity of the subject and object, matter and thought. Heidegger's objective throughout the third section his *Basic Problems* is to show how these two beings are fundamentally unified in being.

In order to solve the problem, Heidegger interprets the subject as always already *engaged*, whether it is conscious of this engagement or not. The subject is never *alone* and isolated from the world. Thought, in other words, is never *just* thought; thought is always *about* something; it is always *about an object*. Hence, “the existence of the subject-object relation depends on the mode of existence of the subject.”¹⁰³ The subject cannot be opposed to any objects unless it is already united to the objects in some way. And a subject only exists insofar as there is something objective that it can exist *with* and *in*. Hence the binary distinction between subject and object, thinking thing and extended thing, expresses a more fundamental unity between the two: a unity that has

101 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 124.

102 *Ibid.*, 125.

103 *Ibid.*, 157.

to do with the subject's relation to its world: the fact that the subject is never alone but always exists within a world that is there for it. As Heidegger explains,

For the Dasein . . . there is always a being and an interconnection with a being already somehow unveiled, without its being expressly made into an object. To *exist* then means, among other things, *to be as comporting with beings* It belongs to the nature of the Dasein to exist in such a way that it is always already with other beings.¹⁰⁴

Thus, the distinction between intellect and matter is resolved through Dasein because Dasein is, generally speaking, the subject as it is *already directed* towards objects. The subject/object division arises through Dasein because it is Dasein and Dasein alone who always already has the key to the distinction between subjects and objects. And as a result, being is unified *before* there is any subject/object division. The distinction between subject and object is not fundamental but rests on a more originary or primary connection between the two that only Dasein's being reveals.

Thus Heidegger thinks being univocally. Despite their varying understandings of univocity, the thinkers we looked at in the first part of this thesis would all agree that the univocity of being, whether being is taken really or merely conceptually or noetically, means that being is both universal and unified. For Heidegger, being is universal insofar as it grounds all of the ontic domains – being grounds all beings – and being is unified

104 Ibid.

insofar as it is the precondition for the distinction between intellect and body, subjectivity and objectivity.

But, Thomas Sheehan would object, the notion that being is itself not a being means that there really is no 'thing' as such that is universal and unites all entities. For him, being is *nothing more than* the analogical unification of beings.¹⁰⁵ There is no being as such. Though clever, Sheehan's objection really has no force because in our effort to show how Heidegger thinks being univocally, it does not matter if being is a being or not. Nor does it matter if being is dependent on Dasein (or some other existence) for its availability and meaning. Just as Scotus' theory of univocity does not need to say anything about reality or real relations in order for it to remain a theory of univocity, Heidegger's univocal being neither needs to be independent of beings or itself being in order for it to be univocal. As a result, Sheehan's objection has no force.

Having shown that Heidegger thinks being univocally, we must remember that this is not the full story. It is, rather, the most straightforward part. For in addition to univocity, Heidegger's ontology supports a version of analogy whereby Dasein, non-Dasein entities, and being are all differentially related. We have already briefly seen that Dasein's relation to being differs from the relationship that obtains between being and

¹⁰⁵ Sheehan, "Heidegger, the Project and the Fulfillment," viii.

non-Dasein entities. This divergence points to Heidegger's covert theory of analogy, a theory that he begins articulating as early as 1916 in his *Habilitationsschrift*.¹⁰⁶

3.2 Analogy

3.2.1 Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift*

Though, generally speaking, Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift* purports to be an examination of the philosophy of John Duns Scotus with an intention of bringing the categorization of language and reality to light, it is, in fact, a summary and phenomenological appropriation of Scotus' theory of transcendentals and Thomas of Erfurt's *Speculative Grammar*. And because it contains some of the seeds of Heidegger's later work (his critique of method; his emphasis on the nearness of lived experience; the problem of categorizing the world; the study of being), we must examine the *Habilitationsschrift* if we are going to trace the trajectory of Heidegger's thinking of analogy.

Heidegger offers his first detailed comments on analogy while providing some background knowledge for his commentary on Erfurt's *Speculative Grammar*. Here he discusses the medieval concept of number and the possibility of counting. A certain set

¹⁰⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Duns Scotus' Theory of the Categories and of Meaning*, trans. Harold Robbins, PhD Dissertation (DePaul University, 1978).

of things can never be counted if there is nothing in common between the various elements: “If I view this tree only in its individuality as not having been there before and never recurring, and if I view *any other tree like this*, then a count could never be arrived at.”¹⁰⁷ Counting is only made possible through the repetition of some *common element* shared by all the members to be counted. Thus, various items in a set must be different insofar as they are able to be counted (they are not one) but they must be at least minimally homogeneous: “[w]here there is order – even the most simple order – already there, there can no longer be talk of an absolute manifold [that is, absolute diversity].”¹⁰⁸ Absolute diversity or an absolute manifold occurs, however, in empirical lived experience: we experience absolutely singular entities though their singularity can never be conceptually counted or ordered such that our lived experience escapes conceptualization and the ability to be numbered. We are left, then, with two different domains: the heterogeneous domain of lived experience and the homogeneous domain of conceptualization. After recognizing these two domains, the problem becomes *the relationship between the two domains*. If we say that the two domains are absolutely different, we favour the domain of lived experience; by contrast, if we assert that the two domains are homogeneously related, we prioritize the theoretical/conceptual domain. Recognizing this dilemma, Scotus claims that the the relationship between the

107 Ibid., 71.

108 Ibid., 72.

empirical or sensory world and the conceptual or super-sensory world *is ordered through analogy*: that is, “it is thoroughly *permeated by analogy*.”¹⁰⁹ Still interpreting Scotus, Heidegger goes on to claim that analogy even structures the very way things are conceptualized – the way lived experience is joined with the theoretical. When counting certain entities, as we have already seen, there needs to be something in common between the various entities as well as some divergence in order to have a thing at all. But the act of counting is precisely an act whereby the theoretical (homogeneous) and the lived (heterogeneous) are brought together. This is done through analogy:

Analogy permeates the fundamental structure of actual reality, the implication is this: homogeneity and heterogeneity are in some fashion *interwoven* in this domain Thus there results a peculiar unity in manifoldness and a manifoldness in unity.¹¹⁰

Hence, the theoretical and the lived are *analogously related*. That is, they are opposed but are, at the same time, harmoniously woven together.

But, in saying that the conceptual and the experienced are analogously woven together, what, exactly, do Heidegger and Scotus mean? Are they simply using the term 'analogy' to express a complex relationship between two opposing domains, or do they mean something more specific? In other words, which, if any, of our three kinds of analogy is Heidegger referring to here? Earlier in his *Habilitationsschrift*, Heidegger

109 Ibid., 73.

110 Ibid., 74.

distinguishes between *two* kinds of analogy: on the one hand, analogy can refer to different ways in which one refers to a single domain of reality. For instance, the terms *principium* and *causa* have overlapping but not entirely coextensive meanings. Both, he explains, “mean something out of which another precedes or through which it perdures.”¹¹¹ However, the meaning of these words *shifts* depending on whether one approaches them through logic or through 'actual reality'. With respect to the former, *principium* refers to the *basis* out of which something arises. Taken logically, *principium* has to do with a ground or a foundation. By contrast, when taken with respect to 'actual reality', *principium* has to do with *causation*: it refers to something that is the cause of another. Hence, Heidegger concludes, terms like *principium* have *analogous* referents: they can refer to two separate but overlapping domains of meaning. The logical domain and the domain of 'actual reality' have something in common insofar as basis and cause are related, but they are not identical: “Both are inconvertible. *Principle* is thus used analogously as *basis* and *cause*.”¹¹² This first definition of analogy seems to line up with our earlier definition of analogy as 'analogy by common reference'. In each case, the analogous terms are related to a common being or thing. In the case of principle, both basis and cause are analogously related through their connection with *principium*. Similarly, *principium* is analogously related to both basis and cause through their overlapping but not coextensive domains of reference.

111 Ibid., 73.

112 Ibid.

The second definition of analogy that Heidegger provides roughly lines up with our earlier definition of analogy as 'analogy of relation'. That is, within this form of analogy there is no third term to which two are compared. Rather, the two analogous terms are similar enough not to be equivocally related, but different enough not to be univocally related. In his short description of this kind of analogy, Heidegger states that "a word's meaning can have reference to an object which has a certain similarity with what is in fact inferred by the meaning."¹¹³ While an object carries the meaning primarily, the second, derivative object, carries the meaning through what it shares with the first object. This kind of analogy obtains insofar as there is a hierarchical relationship between the object that primarily carries the meaning and the object that carries the meaning in a secondary sense.

Having outlined these two kinds of analogy, Heidegger goes on to assert that these forms of analogy are not *by themselves* "prior to the categorial structure of actual reality."¹¹⁴ In other words, the analogical relationship between the homogeneous and heterogeneous realms is *equiprimordial* with the categories, whether these categories are the ten Aristotelian categories or the two concepts of homogeneity and

113 Ibid. In the footnote, Heidegger quotes from Scotus' commentary on *De Rer Prin.* "(alio modo) quia vox uni imponitur proprie et propter aliquam similitudinem ad illud, cui primo imponitur, transfertur vox ad significandum aliud . . . et hoc secundum significat solum propter aliquam similitudinem eius ad illud, cui primo imponitur." Ibid., XV.

114 Ibid., 74.

heterogeneity.¹¹⁵ Analogy is not, *by itself*, fundamental, though accompanied by the ten Aristotelian categories or the categories of homogeneity and heterogeneity, it does permeate “the fundamental structure of actual reality.”¹¹⁶ Further on, when discussing 'actual reality' Heidegger points out that, for Scotus, only God has full reality while all created beings are actual only insofar as they are close to the divine: “[a]lthough both creator and creation are real, they are so, however, in *different* ways *The differences lies in the degree of reality.*”¹¹⁷ Whereas God is real and actual through himself, created beings are real and actual *only through another* – that is, through God. Hence this relationship between God and creation is *analogous* for their degree of reality obtains in different ways: the first through itself and the second through participation. The being of God and the being of creation are not univocally related (as Deleuze would maintain) but analogously related (as Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, Scotus, and Radical Orthodoxy maintains). Concluding his section on analogy, Heidegger asserts that “it is precisely the feature of degrees of actual reality as grounded in analogy, which should overcome the problems that every dualism meets without sinking back into an impossible monism.”¹¹⁸

As a result, “[t]he [ten] categories are merely the ordinal forms for a definitely bounded

115 Again, Heidegger's quotation of Scotus in a footnote clarifies the situation immensely: “[s]ed qualitercumque sit de modo ponendi analogiam, *nullus istorum modorum videtur convenire enti respectu decem praedicamentorum,*” *Duns Scotus' Theory of the Categories*, XV, Quaest. In lib. Physic. Lib I, qu. VII, 388b.

116 *Ibid.*, 74.

117 *Ibid.*, 77.

118 *Ibid.*, 80.

area, which is inherent in character in the whole of the metaphysics world-view.”¹¹⁹ In other words, Aristotle's ten categories are insufficient for describing all of reality. Scotus went further than Aristotle in that he recognized the transcendental character of reality such that, for him, the categories of heterogeneity (the created world) and homogeneity (the divine), united through analogy, are fundamental. And because this form of analogy happens primarily between two hierarchically related domains – God and creation – the form of analogy that pervades, along with the categories of heterogeneity and homogeneity, the world corresponds to our modified definition of 'analogy of relation'.

Having briefly summarized the comments on analogy found in Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift* a few problems or questions arise. For one, we are unsure if Heidegger's comments on analogy are *his own* or serve merely as an explanation of Scotus' position.¹²⁰ Secondly, it is unclear if, in his later writings, he would still use analogy to solve the problem of the relation between heterogeneous and homogeneous domains. For instance, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger goes to great lengths to describe the derivative character of theoretical judgments. A theoretical comportment towards the world, Heidegger claims, derives from a more original or primordial everyday, practical comportment. This division would seem, at first glance, to line up with the distinction, in his *Habilitationsschrift*, between the conceptual domain and the

119 Ibid.

120 At this point in his *Habilitationsschrift*, Heidegger is not discussing Thomas of Erfurt's *Grammatica Speculativa* but Scotus' genuine texts.

lived/experienced domain. However, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes no effort to show that theoretical and everyday modes of comportment are *analogously related*. Perhaps they are; perhaps they are not. Moreover, between the *Habilitationsschrift* and *Being and Time*, Heidegger underwent a major shift in religious orientation. While writing the *Habilitationsschrift* he identified himself as a devout Catholic committed to the Catholic worldview.¹²¹ And yet, just a few years after publishing his *Habilitationsschrift*, Heidegger wrote a letter to Father Engelbert Krebs explaining his decision to break from traditional Catholicism:

Epistemological insights extending to a theory of historical knowledge have made the *system* of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable to me, but not Christianity and metaphysics – these, though, in a new sense.¹²²

Shortly thereafter, Heidegger began speaking and writing about an *atheistic philosophy*.¹²³ Hence, the question of the continuity between Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift* and his post-1919 writings remains open. It is difficult if not impossible to determine the extent to which Heidegger carried over influences from

121 During the 1914/1915 school-year, Heidegger had his grant for “the service of researching and teaching Christian Scholastic philosophy” renewed. See Heidegger, *Supplements*, 20.

122 Martin Heidegger, “Letter to Father Engelbert Krebs (1919),” trans. John van Buren, in *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 69.

123 See the section on Atheistic Philosophy below.

Scotus and Erfurt into his later writings.¹²⁴ As a result, the possibility that theoretical and practical comportment in *Being and Time* are *analogously* related remains open.

Regardless, we *can* be certain that Heidegger played with analogy early in his career. And so we should not be surprised to see it implicitly arise in his post-*Habilitationsschrift* writings. With this in mind, let us now turn to Heidegger's magnum opus, *Being and Time*, where we will find that Dasein, non-Dasein entities, and Being are related by analogy, though Heidegger never uses the term to describe their relationship.

3.2.2 *Being and Time*

Published nearly ten years after his *Habilitationsschrift*, *Being and Time* provides us with Heidegger's most developed phenomenology of Dasein. This is the case because, following the publication of the first two sections of the first part of *Being and Time*, Heidegger, to a certain extent, abandoned his project of investigating being through Dasein in order to focus more on the revelation of being itself. As a result, in the later writings, Dasein is marginalized, though never eliminated. Nevertheless, *Being and Time* contains essential material for our investigation into the relationship between his ontology and the triple division between univocal, analogical, and equivocal being.

124 For more on the relationship between pre- and post-1919 Heidegger, see McGrath, *Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy*, 25-59, John van Buren, *Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 51-64, and Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 69-79.

Central to our investigation is the distinct way in which Heidegger elevates Dasein *over and against* other entities. Whereas other entities can, from a theoretical point of view or as present-at-hand, be considered according to their *existentia*, Dasein, must be viewed according to *existence*. As Heidegger explains, “ontologically, *existentia* is tantamount to *Being-present-at-hand*, a kind of Being which is essentially inappropriate to entities of Dasein's character.”¹²⁵ In other words, because Dasein is always projecting itself ahead of itself in such a way that it is never fully 'here' or 'there', it cannot be studied as if it is fully present 'here' or 'there'. A desk, by contrast, has an *existentia* or a being that can be present-at-hand insofar as it can be scientifically extracted from its surroundings and viewed as a desk *and no more*. Hence, the being of the desk is *qualitatively* different from the being of *Dasein*; whereas the former has *existentia*, the latter has *existence*; whereas the former can be studied accurately from the theoretical point-of-view, the latter cannot.

In addition to the distinction between *existentia* and *existence*, Heidegger also isolates a distinction between *categories* and *existentialia*. Whereas the former describe attributes of non-Dasein entities within the world, *existentialia* apply only to Dasein. Like the earlier distinction between *existentia* and *existence*, the latter is peculiar or specific to Dasein for Dasein exists in the world in its own distinct way. Heidegger states:

¹²⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H42.

Because Dasein's characters of Being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them "*existentialia*". These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call "*categories*" - characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein *Existentialia* and categories are the two basic possibilities for characters of Being."¹²⁶

The existentialia of Dasein include the fact that Dasein is *always already* being-with, dwelling and comporting itself within the world in a concerned way; by contrast, the categories of all other entities include their position, size, and relation to other entities in the world. Whereas Dasein dwells in the world, other entities are in the world *for* Dasein, as objects to be used and surpassed (ready-to-hand) or studied (present-at-hand). Dasein's *existentialia* emphasize or take into consideration the temporal or historical nature of Dasein whereas the *categories* of non-Dasein entities need not take this temporal aspect into consideration because these entities are not temporal.

In addition to the distinction between *categories* and *existentialia*, there is the distinction between *factuality* and *facticity*: the former refers to something that is taken as being fully present and available while the latter refers to Dasein as it is *always already* projecting itself ahead of itself or continuously comporting itself towards objects: "[f]acticity is not the factuality of the factum brutum of something present-at-hand, but a characteristic of Dasein's Being."¹²⁷ Whereas non-Dasein entities are in the

¹²⁶ Ibid., H44.

¹²⁷ Ibid., H135. This characteristic of Dasein is often referred to as Dasein's transcendence, though this form of transcendence must not be confused with theological transcendence which has to do with God's relation to the world.

world as creatures or objects, Dasein *dwells* within the world. The world is there *for-Dasein* while it is not there for non-Dasein entities. Non-Dasein entities can be appropriately viewed factually or scientifically whereas Dasein's fundamental character is always mischaracterized if it is viewed merely scientifically or as a fact. Instead, Dasein is *temporal* and is always escaping every factual description applied to it. Hence, Dasein is *factical*, not *factual*.¹²⁸

These binary distinctions that Heidegger is careful to point out have to do with the *fundamentally different ways in which Dasein and non-Dasein entities are in the world*. Dasein is absolutely unique among entities because it possesses the possibility of thinking the meaning of being and comporting itself in its world with this presupposed meaning: "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it."¹²⁹ Furthermore, the "[u]nderstanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it *is* ontological."¹³⁰ By these statements,

128 For more on the difference between the varying ways Dasein and non-Dasein entities have been (mis-)classified, see Martin Heidegger, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John van Buren (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 15-24.

129 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H12.

130 Ibid. For Heidegger's comments on the necessity of Dasein for there to be Truth see Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 218-222: "There is truth . . . only when and as long as Dasein exists. If and when there are no "subjects," taken in fact in the well-understood sense of the existent Dasein, then there is neither truth nor falsehood." For Heidegger comments on Dasein's relationship to Time see Heidegger *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London: Yale University Press, 1987), 84. "There is no time when man was not, not because man was from all eternity and will be for all eternity but because time is not eternity and time fashions itself into a time only as a human, historical being-there."

Heidegger confirms that the fundamental distinction between Dasein and all other entities is the relation to being as such.¹³¹ Dasein is fundamentally distinct from other entities not because it is rational or religious or looks peculiar, but because it considers and always already has at least a pre-understanding (a covert understanding) of being. Hence, it is fundamentally Dasein's relation to being and the availability of being through Dasein that separates Dasein from all other entities. Any other distinction between Dasein and non-Dasein entities is secondary.

At first glance, this firm distinction between Dasein and non-Dasein entities seems to suggest a thinking of *equivocal* being. Dasein's being *must not be confused with the being of non-Dasein* entities because the two are absolutely different. Such confusion, Heidegger claims, has had tremendous consequences throughout history, resulting in an improper analysis of Dasein from Aristotle through Nietzsche. And yet, upon closer inspection, it seems that Heidegger's alleged penchant for an equivocal separation between Dasein and everything else turns into an analogical relation. Recall that Heidegger's distinction between Dasein and all other entities is an *ontic* distinction – a distinction between two kinds of beings. Hence, the distinction between Dasein and all other entities is not a distinction in being as such but in the being *of* Dasein and the

131 In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Heidegger expands on this thought: “[w]e shall, therefore, speak of the *ontological priority of the Dasein*. In the course of our considerations, we saw that throughout philosophy, even where it is apparently primarily and solely the ontology of nature, there occurs a movement back to the nous, mind, psyche, soul, logos, reason, the *res cogitans*, consciousness, the ego, the spirit – that all elucidation of being, in any sense, is oriented toward this entity,” *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 223.

being *of* all other entities. Being (the ontological domain) is not separated; rather, it is the domain of beings (the ontic domain) that is divided *based* on its relation to the domain of being. Dasein is distinct from all other beings precisely because it, and it alone, asks the question of the meaning of being and has a pre-understanding of being.

As a result, equivocity flies away in the face of a possible *analogical relationship* between Dasein and all other entities. Since Heidegger himself never describes the relationship in terms of analogy, we are left to our own conjectures when thinking about how Dasein and non-Dasein entities are related. Nevertheless there are, it seems, two ways in which Dasein and non-Dasein entities can be analogically related: through 'analogy by common reference' and through 'proportional analogy'. Dasein and non-Dasein entities could be analogically related by a common reference if we take the *primum analogatum* to be Dasein's understanding of being. Though being is the quasi-ground for both Dasein and non-Dasein entities, it is only a ground insofar as Dasein exists to think it. And so, because Dasein alone has access to a thinking of being, even though being is common to Dasein and non-Dasein entities, Dasein's understanding of being makes this commonality possible. Moreover, whereas Dasein is related to being insofar as being is an *issue* for Dasein, all other entities are related to Dasein in that they manifest being for Dasein. As Heidegger explains, "[i]n so far as Being constitutes what is asked about, and "Being" means the Being of entities, then entities themselves turn out to be *what is interrogated*." When we ask about the meaning of being, we are always

asking about being as it reveals itself through beings and to Dasein. Hence, Dasein and all other entities could be related through 'analogy of common reference' if we take Dasein's understanding of being to be the primary analogate with being and non-Dasein entities to be derivatives *in the same way* that medicine and urine are derivatives of health.

This being the case, we can *also* take the relationship between Dasein and all other entities to be a relationship of 'proportional analogy'. In proportional analogy, two things are related insofar as they are proportional to each other. Four is proportional to two insofar as four can be evenly divided by two. Now proportionality, which includes four terms, can happen between two triangles of different sizes. If side AB is to BC in the first triangle as side XY is to YZ in the second triangle, the two triangles are related through proportionality (and not mere proportion). This is the way that Henry of Ghent interprets the relationship between creatures and God: the essence and existence of creatures is *proportionally analogous* to the essence and existence of God. Taking these examples as cues, we could say that Dasein and non-Dasein entities are related through proportional (as opposed to proportioned) analogy insofar as the existentialia and facticity of Dasein is proportional to the categories and factuality of all other entities: Dasein's existentialia is related to its facticity as the categories of non-Dasein entities are related to their factuality. Furthermore, whereas Dasein is always already comporting

itself towards certain things within the world, other entities merely exist *for Dasein*: they can be scientifically studied or pragmatically used.

Having outlined two ways in which analogy seems to appear in *Being and Time*, we must remember that in each case our descriptions of analogy *are subordinate* to Heidegger's thinking of univocal being. Hence, as the fundamental question of *Being and Time* implies, univocity still applies to being: there is only one being to be considered and it is unified and singular though it is not, itself, a being. Nevertheless, once we concern ourselves with the relationship between Dasein and all other entities, it seems we can only understand the relationship between them through analogy. We can therefore provisionally characterize Heidegger's ontology as follows: univocity, for the most part, reigns in the ontological realm because being, as such, is universal and united; however, analogy reigns insofar as the being of Dasein, being, and the being of all other entities *differ* but are, whether proportionally or through a common reference, *analogically related* through their relation to Dasein's understanding of being.

So far, in our analysis of Heidegger's ontology (and ontic-ology), we have avoided any reference to the divine. This is, in large part, because Heidegger avoids the question of God when carrying out his phenomenological research. And yet the question of God is paramount to the philosophies of both Scotus and nearly all other medieval philosophers. For many of them, the question of being is fundamentally tied to the

question of God. Thus, any understanding of a philosopher's ontology, when viewed through medieval categories, is necessarily incomplete insofar as it fails to address the relationship between God and the world or, rather, God and being. Hence, in order to properly carry out our investigation, we will have to look at what Heidegger says about the relationship between God and being. We have already noted, in our analysis of onto-theology, that Heidegger considers the philosophical appropriation of God to be an error. But, even so, we have not fully outlined *how* he considers God and creation to be related. Thus, for clues about their relationship, we will turn first to Heidegger's understanding of 'onto-theology' and 'methodological atheism' before looking at his lecture, "Phenomenology and Theology".

3.3 *Equivocity*

3.3.1 **Atheistic Philosophy**

Whereas Heidegger only begins seriously to employ the term 'onto-theology' in his later, post-1930 writings, his quest for an atheistic philosophy is apparent in even his earliest Freiburg lectures.¹³² In the "Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with

132 Hints of Heidegger's methodological atheism can even be found in his 1920 Summer course on the *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression: Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation*, trans. Tracy Colony (New York: Continuum, 2010). In this text, Heidegger asserts that "[t]he radical explication of the phenomenological problematic whose sense is to be attained will know how to handle Greek philosophy (Plato and Aristotle) and equally modern philosophy since Descartes in the destructive aspect, such that only therewith the positively decisive destruction of Christian philosophy clearly

Aristotle,” for example, Heidegger claims that if philosophy is to concern itself with factual life – life as it is in its lived, pre-theoretical, comporting – then it must be “in principle atheistic”:¹³³

[I]f philosophy is *in principle atheistic* and understands such about itself – then it has resolutely chosen factual life with a view to its facticity [as opposed to viewing it through a theoretical lens] and, in acquiring it as an object for itself, it has preserved it in its facticity [philosophy has not distorted the life it aims to study].¹³⁴

By this, Heidegger means that atheistic philosophy, unlike theologically motivated philosophy, is able to focus on lived experience *as* lived experience: life *as* it is lived instead of life *as* it is interpreted by a set of religious prescriptions or doctrines. In other words, atheistic philosophy is able to examine phenomena as they present themselves instead of relying on some traditional handed-down interpretation.

Clarifying himself in a footnote, Heidegger goes on to distinguish his methodological atheism from materialistic atheism – an atheism that denies God

prepares itself,” Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression*. For an approving articulation of Heidegger's methodical atheism, see Laurence Paul Hemming, *Heidegger's Atheism: The Refusal of a Theological Voice* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002). In this text, Hemming argues that methodological atheism renders theological investigations into metaphysics obsolete. For a competing appraisal of Heidegger's atheism, see the postscript to Sean McGrath, *Heidegger: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008).

133 Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with Aristotle: An Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation,” trans. John van Buren, in Martin Heidegger, *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond*, ed. John van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 121.

134 Ibid.

absolutely. For Heidegger, "'atheistic' means: keeping itself [philosophy] free from the temptations of that kind of concern and apprehension that only talks glibly about religiosity."¹³⁵ Hence, an atheistic philosopher does not need to be an atheist with respect to the existence of God: atheistic philosophy, rather, has to do with the way philosophy is carried out *and not* with the actual character of God. Over ten years after writing his brief 1922 study of Aristotle (which he originally intended to turn into a book), Heidegger, once again, criticizes the idea of a religious philosophy. This time, in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he asserts that the idea of a Christian philosophy is as absurd as a square circle: "A 'Christian philosophy' is a round square and a misunderstanding."¹³⁶ To be a 'Christian Philosopher' is to already have the answers provided by theology:

Anyone for whom the Bible is divine revelation and truth has the answer to the question "Why are there essents rather than nothing?" even before it is asked One who holds to such faith can in a way participate in the asking of our question, but he cannot really question without ceasing to be a believer and taking all the consequences of such a step.¹³⁷

Whereas the 'Christian Philosopher' *already* knows that God is the reason why there is something rather than nothing, methodologically atheistic philosophy must ponder the question more thoroughly; moreover, whereas the 'Christian Philosopher''s faith gets in

135 Ibid., 196.

136 Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 7.

137 Ibid., 6-7.

the way of him studying factual life as factual life, the atheistic philosopher does not get burdened by allegedly preestablished and divinely revealed truths.

This having been said, atheistic philosophy *is* related to the divine and *is* a theological position: any atheistic study of factual life requires the philosopher to raise her/his fist against God:

Any philosophy that understands itself . . . as the factual how of the interpretation of life, must know . . . that this throwing of life back upon itself which gets actualized in philosophy is something that in religious terms amounts to raising one's hand against God.¹³⁸

So while atheistic philosophy resists theological interpretations of phenomena, it is *not* theologically neutral. According to McGrath, by 'raising one's fist against God' Heidegger refers to Martin Luther's claim that philosophy has *nothing* to add to theology but is, on the contrary, the result of fallen humanity's inability to naturally know anything about God or humanity as it is in a perfected state:

[A]fter the Fall, we no longer enjoy a natural state of being. We are factually God-forsaken [As a result t]he only philosophical task left for God-forsaken humanity is the elaboration of being-without-God, that is, a formally atheistic hermeneutics of facticity.¹³⁹

138 Heidegger, "Phenomenological Interpretations," 193-194.

139 McGrath, "Facticity of Being Godforsaken," 283-285.

Hence, through methodological atheism, Heidegger simultaneously demands that we philosophize without recourse to the answers provided by theology *and* that, due to our sinful natures, we only philosophize about man as he is in his sinful state.

Methodological atheism, then, demands that philosophy and theology be kept separate. Philosophy has to do with the study of being *as* being and without any religious influences. And yet, philosophy, by studying being in this way, only studies being *as fallen humanity can study it*. In other words, philosophy, because it is following Luther's pronouncement an unregenerate science, cannot know God as God. It must, therefore, avoid the question of the divine and leave that domain to the science of revealed truths.

3.3.2 Onto-Theology

Heidegger's early call for an atheistic philosophy matures in his later writings into a critique of onto-theology. But just as the meaning of an atheistic philosophy is initially unclear, the term 'onto-theology' has, itself, been repeatedly misunderstood and misused. In his book, *Overcoming Onto-Theology*, Merold Westphal states that 'onto-theology' is more often used to inflame than to inform:

'[O]nto-theology' becomes the abracadabra by which a triumphalist secularism makes the world immune to any God who resembles the personal Creator, Lawgiver, and Merciful Savior of Jewish, or Christian, or Muslim monotheism.¹⁴⁰

Since Heidegger, many ontologists hastily deem any philosophical study of God to be onto-theological and philosophically naive. For them, onto-theology denotes improper reasoning or thinking about something without respecting the uniqueness of what is being thought about. And yet, despite its status as a controversial and overused term, Heidegger's articulation of onto-theology remains crucial for understanding the relationship between his ontology and the divine.

Though, historically speaking, the term 'onto-theology' originates with Immanuel Kant,¹⁴¹ it was not until Heidegger dusted it off that it acquired its current popular and, perhaps, infamous status. We find Heidegger's most clear articulation of onto-theology in "The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics,"¹⁴² the final section of a seminar on Hegel's *Science of Logic* given in the mid-fifties. In this short piece, Heidegger highlights the inter-relation of three terms: ontology, metaphysics, and theology, where onto-theology is a combination of ontology and theology. Broadly speaking,

140 Merold Westphal, *Overcoming Ontotheology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 3.

141 Iain Thompson, *Heidegger on Onto-Theology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7.

142 Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics," in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 42-74.

'metaphysics', for Heidegger, is the study of beings as a whole. Taken etymologically, *meta – physis* can mean beyond nature or outside of nature such that, in “What is Metaphysics?”¹⁴³ Heidegger claims that metaphysics stands in contrast with all other sciences, such as biology or chemistry; whereas the two latter sciences study specific domains of entities – living things or molecular compositions – metaphysics is concerned with the entities taken in their entirety and not with some one specific domain of things or entities. Ontology, furthermore, is the science of being or the science of what underlies all entities or beings. As Iain Thomson explains,

Ontologists understand the *being* of entities in terms of that entity beneath or beyond which no more basic entity can be 'discovered' or 'fathomed' [T]hey then generalize from their understanding of this “exemplary entity” to explain the being of all entities.¹⁴⁴

In a similar vein, theology, commonly understood, is the conceptual science of God or the deity; it concerns “representational thinking about God.”¹⁴⁵ Put differently, whereas ontology studies being – what is fundamental to all beings – theology studies the divine – what exceeds all things; the former is concerned with “the universal and primal” while

143 Martin Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2008), 89-110.

144 Thomson, 14.

145 Heidegger, “Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution,” 54. As we will see later on, Heidegger offers his own conflicting account of what theology is in his lecture “Phenomenology and Theology”. For most, theology is the thematization of the divine. But because, as Heidegger claims, we *cannot* thematize God without misrepresenting him, theology is actually the conceptualization of the life of faith. See the section on “Phenomenology and Theology” below.

the latter is concerned with “the highest and ultimate.”¹⁴⁶ Onto-theology, then, is the combination of the study of being with the study of the divine – when what grounds all things is simultaneously considered to be what exceeds all things – a combination that, Heidegger argues, is metaphysics' innate response to the question of why there is something rather than nothing.

Returning, then, to the text on onto-theology, after dealing with several questions surrounding Hegel's notion of being, Heidegger moves on to examine what Hegel says about the beginning of science. The beginning of science is with God or the science of God: “If science must begin with God, then it is the science of God: theology.”¹⁴⁷ Hence, science begins with metaphysics insofar as it examines the whole of entities – the whole of entities is considered when considering its origin. Secondly, the science of the beginning is ontology insofar as it posits being as the beginning of or explanation for the existence of entities. And finally, this science is theology when it posits God as being identical to the being and the beginning of entities. Thus, onto-theology arises out of the conjunction of ontology with theology – the science of being and the science of God: in its search for the origin of science, onto-theology and metaphysics posit God as a solution and end up identifying God with being and being with God. God is no longer the mere beginning of science; God is also an object of

¹⁴⁶Heidegger, “Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution,” 61.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 54.

science and metaphysics. Put differently and with recourse to Thomson's work, metaphysics is ontological when it seeks out what grounds everything and metaphysics is theological when it posits the ultimate ground as a single being: "[M]etaphysics functions as ontology when it searches for the most general ground of entities" and "metaphysics thinks theologically when it [thinks the] "highest entity" [as] the ultimate ground of the being of entities."¹⁴⁸ Hence, the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics occurs when God is equated with being and posited as the explanation, source, ground, and beginning of all other entities.

Now that we have some idea as to what onto-theology is, why is it so problematic? What is wrong with positing God as being and the ground of all beings or entities? The problem, simply put, is that onto-theology and metaphysics posit the divine as the source of all entities without actually finding it there. Heidegger supposes that God or 'the deity' is not originally in philosophy. Nor is the deity originally something for metaphysics to consider; rather, God has continuously entered into philosophy or metaphysics because he is so often *invited* there: "the deity can come into philosophy only insofar as philosophy, of its own accord and by its own nature, requires

148 Thompson, 14-15. And again, in Heidegger's words, "[w]hen metaphysics thinks of beings with respect to the ground that is common to all beings as such, then it is logic as onto-logic. When metaphysics thinks of beings as such as a whole, that is, with respect to the highest being which accounts for everything, then it is logic as theo-logic." "Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution," 70-71.

and determines that and how the deity enters into it.”¹⁴⁹ Philosophy does not invite 'the deity' because it has found it; rather, philosophy invites 'the deity' because it needs to fill in the void left open by the question/problem of the origin of beings. Since metaphysics cannot find a secure being upon which all entities and beings rest, it takes God (from religion/theology) and places him at the origin as the being/a being able to be conceptually studied and fitted within a framework. In Heidegger's words, the bringing of God into philosophy is “the essence of metaphysics”,¹⁵⁰ it is the essence of the approach to the question of the beginning of beings.

Now, in bringing the deity into philosophy and positing it as the most ultimate, primal, and superior being, philosophy acts as if the source of beings is itself a being; in other words, it confuses being with beings, assuming that the two can be thought in similar ways. Against this (common) view, Heidegger explains that “nowhere in beings is there an example for the active nature of being, because the nature of being is itself the unprecedented exemplar”,¹⁵¹ that is, there is nothing that is true about beings that can, in a proper or truthful way, be analogously predicated of or applied to being. It is incorrect, for instance, to think of being in the way that a genus, such as fruit, is thought. This having been said, as Heidegger explains, the relationship between being and beings

149 Heidegger, “Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution,” 56.

150 Ibid., 71.

151 Ibid., 66.

is a bit like the relationship between fruit and particular kinds of fruit. One can buy apples and pears but one cannot buy fruit as such. Similarly, one can engage with beings of various sorts but one cannot engage with being as such. Nevertheless, we must always keep in mind that the analogy between fruit and being (or any other analogy between being and something else) does not hold because “[i]t is still infinitely more impossible to represent “Being” as the general characteristic of particular beings.”¹⁵² than it is to represent 'fruit' as the general characteristic of particular fruit. The lesson to be learned, however, is that being is not a being and cannot be thought of in the same way that we think of beings/entities.

In thinking through onto-theology, we come very close to atheism. Near the end of “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics,” Heidegger explains why the god of metaphysics – the god used to answer the question of the beginning of entities – is not a god to whom we can pray: “Man can neither pray nor sacrifice to this god. Before the *causa sui*, man can neither fall to his knees in awe nor can he play music and dance before this god.”¹⁵³ Heidegger calls for a “god-less thinking”, a thinking that is “more open to Him [the divine God] than onto-theo-logic would like to admit.”¹⁵⁴ This talk of

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid., 72.

154 Ibid.

'god-less thinking' brings us close to what Heidegger says about atheism very early in his career and gives us a better idea of what methodological atheism is all about.

Hence, Heidegger's early endorsements of atheism *is* related to his later articulation of onto-theology: the former is the way to avoid falling into the pitfalls of the latter. This leaves us, then, with at least two domains with respect to talk about God: there is one, philosophical domain, in which God is not welcome. Despite what Heidegger has said about the impossibility of a presuppositionless philosophy, philosophy, he claims, must be ignorant with respect to the existence of God. God is only (inappropriately) *brought into* philosophy to solve difficult questions – such as the question of why there is something rather than nothing – not because he is found anywhere. Then, aside from philosophy, there seems to be a second domain with respect to talk about God: in this domain, we are allowed to talk about God, but our talk about him is not *philosophical*. In a seminar given in Zurich in 1951, Heidegger states that were he to write a theology, the word 'being' would not be in it.¹⁵⁵ By this, he seems to mean that he would keep philosophical and theological discourses distinct: when we talk about God, we must not talk philosophically; when we talk philosophically, we must

155 "Einige wissen vielleicht, daß ich von der Theologie herkomme und ihr noch eine alte Liebe bewahrt habe und einiges davon verstehe. Wenn ich noch eine Theologie schreiben würde, wozu es mich manchmal reizt, dann dürfte in ihr das Wort "Sein" nicht vorkommen." Martin Heidegger, *Seminare 1951-73*, ed. Curd Ohwadt (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1986), 436-437.

not resort to theology. Heidegger's views on this are made even clearer in his essay "Phenomenology and Theology."¹⁵⁶

3.3.3 "Phenomenology and Theology"

The edition of "Phenomenology and Theology" that appears within *The Piety of Thinking* is a revised version of a lecture Heidegger presented in 1927 in Tübingen and in 1928 in Marburg. In the edited version, Heidegger opens his lecture with the question of how theology and philosophy are related. Against the popular view, which maintains that theology and philosophy are opposed in the same way as faith and knowledge, Heidegger asserts that both philosophy and theology are sciences. As a result, far from being an opposition between faith and knowledge, the opposition of philosophy and theology is, in fact, "a question about the *relationship of two sciences*."¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, even as sciences, philosophy and theology are fundamentally different. Whereas philosophy is an *ontological* science, theology is an *ontic* science. Whereas the former deals with being *qua* being, the latter is concerned with thematizing (conceptualizing) the life of faith. And so, insofar as theology is ontic and philosophy ontological, theology

156 Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenology and Theology," in *The Piety of Thinking: Essays*, ed. James Hart and John Maraldo (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976), 5-21.

157 *Ibid.*, 5.

“is closer to chemistry and mathematics than to philosophy.”¹⁵⁸ This is the case because theology deals with *given phenomena* (the ontic) just as chemistry and mathematics are concerned with particular *given* beings. By contrast, philosophy is concerned with being as such (the ontological) as it is given *through* the ontic but is, itself, not a being. The opposition, then, between theology and philosophy is an opposition between two *layers* of science. Philosophy, being an ontological science, is *more fundamental* with respect to being as such than theology.

Now, despite the term 'theology' being a conjunction of *theos* (God) and *logos* (discourse/study), Heidegger claims that the word does not refer to the study of God. Rather, theology is the study or the conceptualization of *faith* and the *faithful life*. The faithful life, in turn and when read against *Being and Time*'s quasi-anthropology, is one of many different *modes* of living; the faithful life is an *ontic* way in which Dasein can comport itself in the world and is, by no means, the *only* way Dasein exists. While some human beings go about their lives *without* faith, others live faithfully. It is the life of the latter and the way in which it manifests faith throughout history that is the concern of theology. Hence, theology is not, on the one hand, a mere clarification of the revealed propositions of, say, the Bible; nor is it the study of God *qua* God. Rather, theology “is a conceptual knowing of that which first of all allows Christianity to become a radically

158 Ibid., 6.

historical event,"¹⁵⁹ that is, the manifestation of faith. Having clarified theology's relation to faith, Heidegger quotes and appropriates Luther's definition of the term: "'[f]aith is permitting ourselves to be seized by the things we do not see'."¹⁶⁰ This 'permitting' is, in turn, the same as *believing*. Those who comport themselves in the world with a mode of *believing/faith* are precisely those who manifest the experience of being *overtaken by something unseen*. This lived experience of faith, however, is not fully resistant to interpretation or conceptualization. Were it resistant to description or conceptualization, there would be no theology. Hence, Heidegger claims, all theologies, such as Christian theology, are *fundamentally* the conceptualization of the unseen as they manifest themselves through believers. "Theology," in other words, "is the science of faith."¹⁶¹

The relationship between philosophy and theology, then, becomes a relationship of *correction*. Philosophy, as *the science of the ontological*, is *more fundamental* than theology, as a positive science of an ontic realm. As such, it serves as a *corrective* for theology because "[e]very ontic interpretation [such as theology or chemistry or anthropology] operates within the basic context of an ontology."¹⁶² In other words, every science of some particular domain of beings presupposes the science of being *qua* being. Thus, when theology goes astray with respect to its ontology, philosophy, through

159 Ibid., 9.

160 Ibid., 10.

161 Ibid., 11.

its careful understanding of being, must bring theology back in line.¹⁶³ So, for example, the theological concept of sin has its roots in the philosophical/ontological notion of guilt. If the theological concept of sin deviates too far from the philosophical notion of guilt, philosophy must bring the theological concept back into line.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, sin is by no means reducible to guilt - "sin, in its essence, is not to be deduced rationally from the concept of guilt"¹⁶⁵ - because the characterizing properties of sin - what makes sin sin and not guilt - come from faith, an openness to the unseen. There is an irreducible remainder in the concept of sin that prevents it from being nothing more than guilt even though guilt is the ontological possibility of there being any sin at all. So we can now understand the relationship between philosophy and theology as follows: philosophy is concerned with the realm of the ontological while theology is concerned with faith as it arises in believers. The ontological is what makes the faithful life possible though faith and theology cannot be reduced to the ontological or the philosophical. Thus, philosophy, for Heidegger, grounds theology and corrects it when it goes astray, though theology is not reducible to philosophy.

Where, then, does theology gather that remainder that cannot be reduced to philosophy? How does faith *go beyond* ontology? It is, I believe, at this point where

162 Ibid., 17.

163 Ibid., 19-20.

164 Ibid., 19.

165 Ibid.

Heidegger's understanding of God comes to the fore. Recall what Heidegger will say in his later writings about God and philosophy: philosophy *ought* to be atheistic for every philosophical appropriation of God is misdirected: God is *outside* of philosophy. Thus, it seems to be the case, from our reading of "Phenomenology and Theology" (as well as from the notable scarcity of the name of God within that text) that, for Heidegger, being and the ontological domain is *other than* God. Faith is irreducible to philosophy precisely because it is the lived experience of being open to God (the unseen) – the very God who lives outside of being, is other than being, and has been wrongly characterized by philosophy/metaphysics as the highest and most fundamental being. Hence, God can be said to be *equivocally* related to being. Being has nothing to do with God and God is not an object to be studied by philosophy (or theology). Rather God is what makes possible the life of faith; he is what motivates the unseen to reveal itself in the life of the believer. Further evidence for this view comes from the final text that we will analyze: Heidegger's 1931 lecture course on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.¹⁶⁶

3.3.4 Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

In his summer course on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Heidegger focuses on the first three chapters of book Θ. In these three chapters, Aristotle's investigates the relationship and

¹⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).

distinction between potentiality and actuality (δύναμις and ἐνέργεια). Heidegger's comments on this investigation need not concern us here, there is a section near the end of the introduction to his lecture course that is relevant to our own study. In this section, Heidegger offers one of his most extensive treatments of analogy. Having explained why being, for Aristotle, is not a genus and how, for Parmenides, being is one, Heidegger asks how the various meanings of being in Aristotle are related to each other. To begin with, Heidegger explains that, for Aristotle, that being is not a genus entails that it cannot be said synonymously of both being as such and beings – of both the ontological and ontic domains. And because being as such and individual beings are not absolutely unrelated – equivocal – they must possess some intermediate relationship. This relationship, Heidegger continues, is like the relationship between various healthy things and practices – medicine, exercise, urine – and health as such. In other words, being as such and various particular beings are related through 'analogy by common reference'. In other words, the meaning of being as it is expressed in individual beings *depends upon* the meaning of being as such. Hence, being as such contains the primary meaning of being while all particular beings are beings only insofar as they are grounded in being as such: “[t]he first category is the sustaining and guiding fundamental meaning of being . . . which imparts itself to all the others so that these themselves have the meaning of being due to their relationship to it.”¹⁶⁷

167 Ibid., 35.

Having outlined how Aristotle understanding the ontological and the ontic domains to be related, Heidegger criticizes the notion of analogy as it has been handed down to us. During the Middle Ages, philosophers interpreted *all* of Aristotle's meanings of being – not just the distinction between the ontological and the ontic domains – as being analogically related and unified in *substance*:

Already in the Middle Ages . . . it was concluded that the first guiding fundamental meaning of being in general – for the four ways together as well, not only for the one and its multiplicity – was ουσία, which is usually translated as 'substance'.¹⁶⁸

In other words, the Scholastics went *beyond* Aristotle in uniting *all* of the meanings of being and not just the ontological and the ontic. For them, the categories, as well as the ontological-ontic distinction and the active-passive distinction are all analogically related. As a result, they, and their nineteenth century decedents have *wrongly* interpreted Aristotle.

Furthermore, medieval philosophers have erred in bringing God into the discussion and causing him to be analogically related to being as well. God, for these Scholastics, is simultaneously different from *and yet connected* to being as such: “[t]he God of the Christian belief, although the creator and preserver of the world, is altogether different and separate from it; but he is being . . . in the highest sense, the

168 Ibid., 37.

summum ens.”¹⁶⁹ But to link God and creation through analogy, Heidegger asserts, is not a solution to a problem but a mere formula or *pseudo-solution* which can be passed along from generation to generation without much consideration: “[It can sink] to the level of a catchword.”¹⁷⁰ Analogy, when taken in this sense, is an *avoidance* of the question of the relationship between God and creation. Among the medievals, only Meister Eckhart, in his early writings, expressed the relationship properly. For him being as such is *absolutely different* from God: “‘God 'is' not at all, because 'being' is a finite predicate and absolutely cannot be said of God’.”¹⁷¹ Hence, Heidegger concludes, we must leave the question of the relationship between the many different senses of being *open* and resist the temptation to construct a complete Aristotelian metaphysics grounded in analogy:

We must guard against manipulated things artificially in order to concoct in the end a smooth “system.” It is necessary to leave everything open and questionable; only thus will we be capable of freeing and keeping alive Aristotle's unresolved innermost questioning.¹⁷²

Thus, though we know that, for Aristotle, the ontic and the ontological domains are analogically related, we *must not go further* and claim that all of Aristotle's other kinds

169 Ibid., 38.

170 Ibid., 38.

171 As quoted in Heidegger, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 39.

172 Ibid., 39.

of being – substance and the nine accidents – are likewise related analogically. Rather, we must stop where Aristotle stops and not try to fill in the gaps in his philosophy. Moreover, we must resist the medieval attempt to bring God into philosophy by analogously attaching him to beings. Such efforts, Heidegger warns, merely serve to *cover over* real problems. They are *false* solutions, proposed in order to *advance* philosophy when, in fact, they do more to *hinder* genuine philosophical investigation.

Though Heidegger devotes only a few pages of his lecture course to his discussion of analogy, these pages go a long way towards clarifying Heidegger's understanding of being. Recall how Heidegger *agrees* with Eckhart, against most other Scholastics, that God and being are incommensurate: “‘God ‘is’ not’ at all, because ‘being’ is a finite predicate and absolutely cannot be said of God.”¹⁷³ This agreement with Eckhart reinforces the view, proposed at the end of our previous section, that Heidegger understands God and being/beings to be *equivocally* related. Faith, then, happens between God and a particular being: it is particular being's (a particular Dasein's) openness to what is other than being – God or the transcendent. So when Dasein lives *faithfully*, it is living *as a being* while simultaneously being open to what cannot be subsumed within the domain of being as such. Hence, with respect to the relationship between God and being, Heidegger offers *equivocity*, separation, or openness as a 'solution'. God and being are *equivocally* related.

173 Ibid., 38.

3.3.5 Heidegger, Atheism, and Onto-Theology

We can now offer some conclusions about our earlier discussion of Heidegger's relationship to atheism. Earlier on we observed that Heidegger adamantly opposed the idea of a Christian philosophy. His opposition to the mixture of Christian dogma and philosophical investigation manifests itself throughout his early writings (with the exception of his *Habilitationsschrift*). Philosophy, for him, must remain methodologically atheistic because God is not subordinate to being: "God 'is' not". Any attempt to bring God into philosophy as a solution to a problem – such as the problem of why there is something rather than nothing – simultaneously mischaracterizes the character of God by subordinating him to being *and* does philosophy a disservice by foreclosing questioning through the dogmatic imposition of 'God' as a solution to all problems. Hence, ignorance of the fact that God and being are equivocally related engenders onto-theology or a metaphysics that prefers traditional formulas to genuine questioning. For this reason, Heidegger maintains, we must insist on the absolute separation of God and being.

As a result of the separation between God and being, theology, as an ontic science *is not the science of God as such*. There is no such science of God as such for God, not being a being among beings (subordinate to ontology) cannot be scientifically studied. Rather, we must resort to the study of *faith* as a possible mode of Dasein's

existence. Faith, in turn, is the closest we can get to a 'science of God' for it is, following Luther's definition, an openness to the unseen: an openness to the divine or that which lives beyond being. Hence theology is several steps removed from God: theology thematizes or conceptualizes the life of faith where the life of faith, in turn, is an openness to God. To eliminate the mediate role of faithful living between God and theology would be to succumb to the temptation of onto-theology: the belief that God as God can be philosophically conceptualized and offered as a solution to difficult problems. This having been said, even if we recognize that God and being are equivocally related, were we to ignore the analogical relationship between Dasein and all non-Dasein entities, we would still fall into the snare of metaphysics. This is precisely what many philosophers, from Aristotle through Descartes, have done. Instead of recognizing the distinction between Dasein and all non-Dasein entities, Aristotle treated Dasein – the human being – as merely one entity among others. Just as a dog, for instance, might be determined as a barking animal, the human being is a *rational* or *discoursing* animal. The distinction between dogs and human beings – rationality – is really just the distinction between one animal and another.¹⁷⁴ By contrast, Heidegger contends that human beings are distinct from non-Dasein entities because they, unlike

174 This is a key difference separating Heidegger and Deleuze. Whereas the former adamantly asserts that Dasein differs from non-Dasein entities, Deleuze, in his effort to rid ontology of analogy, claims that *all beings* – whether these beings are human or not – are on the same ontological level. No one being is hierarchically opposed to another such that, for Deleuze contra Heidegger, there is *no* primary analogate. For Heidegger, by contrast, Dasein's understanding of Being is the primary analogate. See Deleuze, 30-42.

the latter, can think being and have a pre-understanding of being. As a result, the methodology we use when describing Dasein as Dasein must be fundamentally different from the methods we use to characterize non-Dasein entities. As we have already seen, for instance, whereas Dasein exists *factically*, non-Dasein entities exist *factually*. That is, whereas the former are always comporting themselves in their world, the latter do not. When this distinction between Dasein and non-Dasein entities is ignored, however, Dasein's particularity – the fact that it, and it alone has access to the meaning of being – is covered over. As a result, Dasein can be violently interpreted as nothing more than a present-at-hand entity, rather than a factically existing being. Hence, the analogical relationship between Dasein, non-Dasein entities, and being itself must be observed insofar as this relationship recognizes (1) that no Dasein can be reduced to a mere non-Dasein entity, and (2) that being, as such, is not itself a being but grounds the being of all entities, including the beings of Dasein and all non-Dasein entities.

Finally, we must recognize the univocity of being as such; that is, we must keep in mind that being, as such, is unified and not dispersed throughout equivocal domains. Were being dispersed and equivocally spread out, there would be no way for Dasein's investigation into being to be of any value when considering the ontic domain. Were the being of Dasein and the being of all non-Dasein entities, for instance, absolutely distinct, Dasein's pre-understanding of being would be of no use when studying non-Dasein entities. The ontic sciences, from chemistry to theology, would not be grounded in

philosophy because they would be studying entities whose being has no relation to the being of Dasein. Hence, as Heidegger maintains throughout his early years (though without stating it explicitly), being as such is univocal and unified. There is one ontology and that ontology grounds *all* of the ontic sciences. In other words, because being as such is univocal, all of the sciences are subordinate to philosophy for all of the sciences study domains of being where philosophy as philosophy investigates being as such.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Having looked at Heidegger's 1931 interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, we can now say, more firmly, that analogy, equivocity, and univocity can all be found within Heidegger's ontology. God and being are equivocally related: God, Heidegger claims, is not subordinate to being; being ought never to be said of God. However, being as such and particularized beings (Dasein and non-Dasein entities) are *analogously* related insofar as being as such serves as the ground for both Dasein and all non-Dasein entities in the same way that health in its abstract sense grounds all other meanings of health. Finally, univocity has a place in Heidegger's thought insofar as being as such, being as the ground of all beings is all encompassing: being is said equally of all entities though it, itself, is not an entity or being. Hence we cannot label Heidegger as being primarily a thinker of univocity (as Deleuze and Tonner do),¹⁷⁵ analogy (like Thomas Sheehan), or equivocity. Rather, the early Heidegger, as we have analyzed him, presents us with an ontology that supports aspects of all three relations. God is absolutely other than being, being is univocally related to all entities, while Dasein and non-Dasein entities are analogously grounded in being. Thus, in a certain sense, Heidegger is very much *not* a follower of Scotus insofar as he thinks God and being are equivocally related; and yet, Heidegger is more Scotistic than Deleuze insofar as Deleuze thinks *absolute immanence*

¹⁷⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35.

without an infinite end while Heidegger still allows for a God outside of being. Thought this way, Heidegger's ontology happens somewhere between Scotus' and Deleuze's: Heidegger accepts Scotus' univocity, though excludes infinite being (God) from it. Similarly, Heidegger (to speak anachronistically) accepts Deleuzian immanence *while* acknowledging a God who supersedes immanent and finite being. Throughout, Heidegger remains opposed to Thomistic and Radical Orthodox attempts to somehow chain God with being through analogy.

Additionally, the three relations in Heidegger's ontology are *hierarchically* related. Analogy only happens within the ontic domain and between the ontic and ontological domains. Univocity, being more fundamental than analogy, happens on the ontological level while equivocity, the most fundamental relation of all, happens between ontology and God, between being and the divine. And so, because equivocity is *more fundamental* than univocity, the inclusion of God (in the being/God polarity) haunts Heidegger's exclusion of God from his methodologically atheistic fundamental ontology. Hence, Heidegger's ontology is *not* theologically neutral but is guided by a more primordial thinking of the divine. We can therefore agree with McGrath's thesis that Heidegger's fundamental ontology is theologically motivated: Heidegger clearly has a place for God though this place is *outside ontology*. In other words, before working out a fundamental ontology, Heidegger has *already* decided to keep God out of philosophy through his methodological atheism. And this commitment to keep God out is, itself, a

theological act of “raising one’s fist against God.” As a result, Heidegger’s phenomenology has implications that go beyond mere ontology. Catherine Pickstock claims that Scotus’ move to univocity laid the grounds for philosophies of alienation and individualism possible. But does Heidegger’s philosophy have any similar consequences? Does his commitment to the univocity of being have social or political effects? At this point, I do not want to venture into speculation but will leave this up to others. In this thesis, I have merely performed the more modest work of showing how Heidegger’s ontology relates to Scholasticism’s triple ontological distinction. In doing so I have briefly pointed out some of the theological consequences though I have not (1) shown how this triple distinction relates to Heidegger’s thinking of time or (2) how this triple distinction works itself out in Heidegger’s later, largely post-c. 1930 thought. I leave these projects for others or for the future. Rather, I have argued that Heidegger provides us with an original ontology, an ontology that is neither Thomistic nor Scotistic (though it resembles the latter more than the former). This ontology, moreover, is *not* the same as Deleuze’s but constructs a hierarchical relation between equivocity, univocity, and analogy whereby the first governs being as such. Hence, Heidegger simultaneously tries to work out a philosophy of immanence and transcendence: his philosophy is immanent insofar as being is concerned; but it is transcendent insofar as it allows for the divine to happen outside of being and outside of any conceptualization as a first principle.

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