

Katholieke
Universiteit
Leuven



Hoger Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte

Henry of Ghent's Doctrine of Analogy

Its Origins and Interpretations

Promoter: **Prof. dr. Russell Friedman**

A thesis presented in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Licentiate (M.A.) in
Philosophy

By

Shane Wilkins

Leuven, May 2007

Atque ut a nostris, ad quos postremo philosophia pervenit, nunc exordiar, est in Ioanne Scoto vegetum quiddam atque discussum, in Thoma solidum et equabile, in Egidio tersum et exactum, in Francisco acre et acutum, in Alberto priscum, amplum et grande, in Henrico, ut mihi visum est, semper sublime et venerandum.

--Giovanni Pico della Mirandola,
Oration on the Dignity of Man, §32.198

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
0.1 Brief Review of the Literature on Henry’s Doctrine of Analogy.....	2
0.1.1 Jean Paulus.....	2
0.1.2 Gómez Caffarena.....	5
0.1.3 Stephen Brown.....	6
0.1.4 Jos Decorte.....	6
0.2 Points of Interpretation.....	8
Chapter 1. The Aristotelian Foundation of the Medieval Doctrine of Analogy.....	9
1.1 Logic, Science and Subject Genus	10
1.1.1 <i>Categories</i> : Logical Terminology.....	10
1.1.2 <i>Categories</i> : Univocal and Equivocal Predication.....	11
1.1.3 <i>Categories</i> : Essential and Accidental Predication	12
1.1.4 <i>Categories</i> : The Ten Categories	13
1.2 Posterior Analytics	14
1.2.1 <i>Posterior Analytics</i> : The Elements of a Science.....	14
1.2.2 <i>Posterior Analytics</i> : The Requirements of a Scientific Syllogism	14
1.2.3 <i>Posterior Analytics</i> : Univocally Predicable Middle Terms.....	16
1.2.4 <i>Posterior Analytics</i> : The Subject Genus	18
1.3 Being is not a Genus.....	18
1.3.1 <i>Physics</i> I: Against Parmenides.....	19
1.3.2 <i>Metaphysics</i> III: A Second Argument that Being is not a Genus.....	21
1.4 <i>Metaphysics</i> as a Science of Being qua Being	23
1.5 <i>Metaphysics</i> as Theology.....	26
Chapter 2. Avicenna and Thomas.....	29
2.1 Avicenna.....	29
2.1.1 Avicenna’s Circularity Objection	30
2.1.3 <i>Ens Commune</i> Has No Principles.....	32
2.1.4 Avicenna on the First Object of the Intellect	33
2.2 Thomas Aquinas.....	33
2.2.1 <i>I Sent.</i> d. 19, q. 5.....	34
2.2.2 <i>Summa Theologiae</i> 1a, q. 13	39
2.2.3 Thomas Aquinas on the Subject of <i>Metaphysics</i>	42
Chapter 3. Henry of Ghent’s Doctrine of Analogy.....	44
3.1 <i>Summa quaestionum ordinariarum</i> a. 21, q. 2: Objections	44
3.1.1 The First Objection.....	45
3.1.2 The Second Objection	46
3.1.3 The Third Objection	46
3.1.4 The First <i>Sed Contra</i>	47
3.1.5 The Second <i>Sed Contra</i>	48
3.2 <i>Summa quaestionum ordinariarum</i> a. 21, q. 2: Henry’s response.....	49
3.2.1 “Being” is not one intention	50
3.2.2 <i>Convenientia similitudinis</i> and <i>convenientia imitationis</i>	51
3.2.3 A <i>convenientia imitationis</i> between God and Creatures	52
3.2.4 Priority and Posteriority in Being	53

	iv
3.2.5 The Order of Cognition and the Order of Being	55
3.3 Summa quaestionum ordinariarum a. 21, q. 2: Response to the Objections.....	56
3.3.1 <i>ad</i> 1 and <i>ad</i> 2	56
3.3.3 <i>ad</i> 3	57
3.3.5 <i>ad</i> 1 and <i>ad</i> 2 <i>sed contra</i>	60
3.4 Henry of Ghent on the Subject of Metaphysics.....	62
Conclusion	69
Bibliography	71
Acknowledgements	73

Introduction

Henry of Ghent's modern commentators have not looked favorably upon his doctrine of analogy. On the general view, Henry is important only as a transitional step between Thomas Aquinas's traditional version of analogy and Duns Scotus's univocity theory. However, Henry's own near contemporaries evaluated his thought quite differently. That Scotus's arguments against analogy attack Henry's formulation rather than Thomas's testifies to the high esteem Henry enjoyed.¹

Unlike Thomas and Scotus, Henry had no great champions after his death presumably because he was not a member of a religious order. Scholars in the 20th century have recognized the importance of Henry's doctrine of analogy for the development of Scotus's univocity theory, but to date no book-length treatment of Henry's doctrine of analogy has appeared. Moreover, insofar as recent scholarship has treated it, Henry's doctrine of analogy has received quite divergent interpretations.

The time seems ripe for a more thorough examination of Henry doctrine on its own terms and with respect to its predecessors. This thesis will attempt to contribute to that goal. The methodology of the thesis is simple. In this introduction, I briefly sketch four major contemporary interpretations of Henry's doctrine of analogy in order to locate the decisive points of interpretation upon which they disagree. Then, in the first two chapters I spend a considerable amount of time expositing the three major sources of Henry's own view, namely Aristotle, Avicenna, and Thomas Aquinas. The third

chapter turns to Henry himself, offering a close reading of *Summa Quaestionum Ordinariarum* a. 21, q. 2, the locus of Henry's doctrine of analogy. Chapter three puts forward an interpretation of the text, compares this interpretation to the four positions sketched in the introduction and attempts to anticipate and undercut a few objections. The conclusion answer the points of interpretation raised in this introduction and summarizes my findings on Henry's relationship to Aristotle, Avicenna, and Thomas.

0.1 Brief Review of the Literature on Henry's Doctrine of Analogy

This thesis will be concerned primarily with four divergent interpretations of Henry of Ghent's doctrine of analogy, namely those of Jean Paulus, José Gómez Caffarena, Stephen Brown, and Jos Decorte.²

0.1.1 Jean Paulus

¹ Gilson seems to be the first modern scholar to have realized that the direct object of Scotus's criticism was Henry rather than Thomas Aquinas, cf. Étienne Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot," *Archive d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age*, no. 2 (1927).

² Stephen Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," *Franciscan Studies* 25 (1965), Jos Decorte, "Henry of Ghent on Analogy: Critical Reflections on Jean Paulus' Interpretation," in *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death*, ed. W. Vanhamel, *Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), José Gómez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en las metafísica de Enrique de Gante*, vol. 93, *Analecta Gregoriana* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1958), Jean Paulus, *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, *Etudes de philosophie médiévale* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1938).

The point of departure of modern scholarship on Henry of Ghent is still Jean Paulus's 1938 monograph *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*. On Paulus's interpretation, Henry's philosophy is torn between a surface Aristotelianism and a more deep-seated Augustinianism. The incongruence of the two positions is especially obvious in his doctrine of analogy.³

Paulus summarizes his interpretation of Henry's doctrine of analogy into two theses:

1° The general notion of being is not truly *one* concept, but *two*, falsely confounded; 2° These two concepts evoke one another or engender one another, whence the confusion that results.⁴

According to Paulus, Henry's theory marks a major departure from Thomas and other traditional theories of analogy, which ground the analogical relation between God and creatures ontologically on the level of causation. Instead, according to Paulus, Henry grounds his theory of analogy in a purely psychological confusion of what are two ontologically equivocal notions of being, namely the divine and the created. These two notions are similar to one another in that they both are indeterminate notions and this similarity allows one to conceive a single confused quasi-generic notion of being prior

³ Paulus, *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, 55. "Mais, il arrive qu'au moment même où il accepte verbalement de prédécesseurs révéérés des postulats insuffisamment réexaminés par lui-même, ce soient des thèses adverses qui gouvernent en réalité, des profondeurs de son inconscient, l'orientation du système. Ces remarques s'appliquent au mieux à Henri de Gand, dont l'augustinisme foncier tient si souvent en échec l'aristotélisme de surface. Peut-être y a-t-il une opportunité particulière à les rappeler dans la cas de l'analogie."

⁴ *Ibid.*, 59. "1° La notion générale de l'être n'est point véritablement *un* concept, mais *deux*, confondus à tort; 2° Ces deux concepts s'évoquent ou s'engendrent l'un l'autre, d'où la confusion qui en résulte" [emphasis original].

to the determination of divine and creaturely being. Ironically, emphasizing so strongly the equivocity of divine and creaturely being leads Henry to a very Avicennian conclusion: there is a single, albeit confused, notion of being prior to the determination of God and creatures.⁵ Scotus, beginning from the same Avicennian starting point ultimately comes to a more satisfactory conclusion, namely that 'being' is one notion univocally predicable of God and creatures.⁶ According to Paulus, Henry's reduction of Thomas's ontological analogy to a merely psychological one in fact dissolves analogy into pure equivocity—precisely the point Scotus argues—and this makes Henry a sort of *nominaliste avant la lettre*.⁷

From this interpretation, Paulus draws two conclusions. First, for Henry there is an exact parallelism between the order of human knowledge and the order of being because the idea of God present in our mind engenders the confused idea of God and

⁵ Ibid., 55-56. "Car si l'idée d'être se présente à l'intellect avant qu'elle se diversifie en idée de Dieu ou en idée de la créature, il faut bien que nous trouvions dans la notion initiale un certain contenu irréductible dont s'accommoderont les suivantes. . . Car après avoir considéré provisoirement l'analogie d'un point de vue aristotélicien, voici qu'Henri l'observe, en fidèle disciple d'Avicenne, sur le plan du concept: dans l'*Ad tertium* de la q. 21, 2 déjà citée."

⁶ Ibid., 58. "Parenté d'analogie, née des rapports de causalité, entretenus sur le plan de l'être? Telle est la solution de S. Thomas qui toujours, au rebours de ce que fait Henri, fonde le connaître sur l'être ; parenté d'univocité, sur le plan exclusif du connaître ? Ce sera l'opinion de Duns Scot. . . "

⁷ Ibid., 60. "Voici qu'encore un coup la notion d'analogie semble se dissoudre à la analyse, pour libérer à l'état pur deux *signifiés* entièrement équivoques. Exclue du champ des conceptions vraies et distinctes, elle ne trouve plus à caractériser que de notions confuses et provisoires, entachées d'erreur, et dont la nature analogique consiste en leur confusion fallacieuse. Dirons-nous que l'assentiment d'Henri au parti traditionnel n'a plus rien que de verbal, et que, nominaliste avant la lettre, son système n'a point de place à offrir à la vieille notion d'analogie?"

creatures.⁸ Second, Paulus follows Gilson in distinguishing sharply between Thomas and Henry in order to protect the former from the thrust of Scotus's attack on analogy.⁹

The general thrust of Paulus's confusion-as-analogy interpretation has been widely influential even upon commentators like Gómez Caffarena and Stephen Brown who disagree with it in the details.¹⁰

0.1.2 Gómez Caffarena

Gómez Caffarena follows Paulus's confusion-as-analogy interpretation, but does so somewhat hesitantly, defining Henry's analogy as a "subjective unity in one confused concept to which correspond diverse but ontologically connected realities, cognizable as diverse in a higher distinction of the concept."¹¹ The difference between

⁸ Ibid., 62. "Curieuse doctrine, en sa hardiesse concertée! Elle suppose, ainsi que nous l'écrivions naguère, le parallélisme exact de l'ordre du connaître et de celui de l'être."

⁹ Ibid., 63-64. "M. Gilson montre, par ailleurs, que la thèse scotiste de l'univocité ne contredit point expressément au thomisme, parce qu'elle se développe sur un plan qui n'est point celui où argumente le docteur dominicain." Paulus references Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot," 115.

¹⁰ Cf. for instance, Stephen Dumont, "Scotus's Doctrine of Univocity and the Medieval Tradition of Metaphysics," in *Was Ist Philosophie im Mittelalters?*, ed. Jan Aertsen and Andreas Speer, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 204-07, Bernard Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin, Philosophes médiévaux* (Louvain-Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1963), 116-19. Decorte notes that Bettoni, Henninger and Boulnois also follow Paulus's psychological interpretation Decorte, "Henry of Ghent on Analogy," 77.

¹¹ Gómez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en las metafísica de Enrique de Gante*, 191. ". . . su analogía se puede definir en resumen como unidad subjetiva en un concepto confuso, al que responden realidades diversas pero ontológicamente vinculadas, cognoscibles

Paulus and Gómez Caffarena is that the latter sees an ontological connection between the two different senses of being, whereas for the former Henry's analogy is purely noetic. Despite this hesitation, Gómez Caffarena still follows Paulus in saying that a confused concept is at the core of Henry's theory of analogy.

0.1.3 Stephen Brown

Stephen Brown, in an important article tracing several Latin authors' interpretations of Avicenna's idea of the unity of the concept of being, understands Henry to be dissenting from Avicenna by rejecting the notion of a concept of being common to God and creatures.¹² Brown points out that the motivation of Henry's doctrine of analogy is to preserve God's transcendence. According to Brown's Henry, "The simple unity of our indistinct concept of being is only an apparent unity, a unity due to an error made by the mind," namely the confusion of divine and creaturely being.¹³ Brown then, seems to still accept from Paulus and Gómez Caffarena the idea that analogy has to do with a confused concept, although he has called into question Paulus's identification of Henry as an Avicennian.

0.1.4 Jos Decorte

como diversas en una ulterior distinción del concepto." Interestingly, Gómez Caffarena goes on to draw a connection between Henry's position and that of Cajetan.

¹² Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," 121.

¹³ *Ibid.*: 122.

The fourth major commentator on Henry's doctrine of analogy is Jos Decorte,⁷ who has written an extensive critique of Paulus. Decorte expresses four "misgivings" about Paulus's interpretation:

1. Paulus's interpretation "fails to appreciate Henry's own words" insofar as Henry repeatedly claims that being is analogous to God and creatures.
2. Against Paulus's conclusions, Henry explicitly denies a parallelism between the order of knowledge and the order of being.
3. Paulus does not notice that Henry takes the language of *convenientia* over from Alexander of Hales and does not explore the possible Franciscan background of Henry's formulation of the doctrine.
4. Paulus assumes that Henry begins with a Cartesian problem of how I can "with and in my ideas, grasp extramental reality?"¹⁴

According to Decorte, far from a faithful Avicennian, Henry actually departs from Avicenna's idea of a common notion of being on the orthodox Aristotelian grounds.¹⁵ Moreover, Decorte breaks from Paulus and Gómez Caffarena by rejecting the interpretation of analogy as a confused concept:

We do not consider the analogical concept of being as an unduly confounded notion of two things or concepts between which there is a causal relationship on the psychological level, but rather follow Henry *himself* in *rejecting* this confused notion [*italics original*].¹⁶

Against Paulus's claim that Henry represents a decisive proto-nominalist re-interpretation of analogy, Decorte argues that Henry's doctrine is completely compatible with Thomas.

¹⁴ Decorte, "Henry of Ghent on Analogy," 79-83.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

It is clear that [Henry] intends his analogy of 'being' to be an analogy *secundum esse et secundum intentionem* . . . In all these respects Henry completely agrees with St. Thomas.¹⁷

Paulus and Decorte represent dramatically divergent interpretations, with Brown and Gómez Caffarena falling somewhere between the two.

0.2 Points of Interpretation

This brief survey of the competing interpretations of Henry's doctrine of analogy suggests four crucial points of interpretation any treatment of the subject should address. First, is Henry's doctrine of analogy grounded ontologically or noetically? Second, does Henry's doctrine of analogy rely upon one confused concept of divine and creaturely beings? Third, does Henry accept or reject an Avicennian idea of a concept prior to the determination of God and creatures? Fourth, what is the relation of Henry's doctrine of analogy to Thomas's?

To begin formulating an answer these questions, I will now lay out the positions of Aristotle, Avicenna, and Thomas to understand where Henry appropriates from them and where he diverges from them on these four crucial points.

¹⁷ Ibid., 99.

Chapter 1. The Aristotelian Foundation of the Medieval Doctrine of Analogy

Before presenting Henry of Ghent's own doctrine of analogy, we must first search out the problems that the doctrine means to resolve. Aristotle is the point of departure for the scholastic doctrines of analogy, because they all attempt to answer an interpretive problem that arises from four seemingly incoherent claims in Aristotle's corpus:

- (1) Every science is limited to one subject genus.
- (2) Being is not a genus.
- (3) Metaphysics is the universal science that studies being qua being.
- (4) Metaphysics is also theology, the science of the separate substances.

There seem to be two problems here. First, (1) and (2) seem to conflict with (3). For if all sciences must be limited to one subject genus and if being is not such a genus, then a science of being ought not to be possible—yet Aristotle claims otherwise. Second, (3) and (4) seem to conflict. How can the universal science of being qua being also be a science of one particular class of entities, even divine ones?

These two problems provoke the following three questions that will guide this chapter:

- (i) How can one construe metaphysics as a science in the Aristotelian sense?
- (ii) What is its subject genus?
- (iii) How can one identify the universal science of metaphysics with theology?

It is important to note that the Aristotelian resolution to these three questions does not depend on what Aristotle calls ἀναλογία but rather on what we will call πρὸς

ἐν predication. In Aristotle's usage ἀναλογία retains the strict mathematical sense of "proportion". Aristotle gives an example of this sense of analogy in *Historia Animalium*, when he says, "what the feather is in a bird, the scale is in a fish."¹ However, Aristotle never invokes this sort of mathematical proportion referring to being or metaphysics.²

1.1 Logic, Science and Subject Genus

Questions (i) and (ii) above ask about the subject and the scientific status of metaphysics. The investigation begins in the *Organon* where Aristotle articulates the logical framework for his understanding of a science.³ The two works in the *Organon* most directly relevant to the inquiry are the *Categories* and the *Posterior Analytics*.

1.1.1 Categories: Logical Terminology

For Aristotle, the "logical definition" (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) of a subject answers the question, "What is x?" For instance, if we ask, "What is a flower?" we expect an answer

¹ *Historia Animalium* I, 486b18-21.

² Cf. Pierre Aubenque, "Sur la naissance de la doctrine pseudo-aristotélécienne de l'analogie de l'être," *Les Études Philosophiques* 13 (1989): 294. "Aristote ne parle jamais d'analogie dans le cas de l'être."

³ Interestingly, although πρὸς ἐν predication plays a crucial role in *Metaphysics* IV, it is not a central notion in the earlier *Organon*. "Whether or not Aristotle did think at the time of writing the *Topics* (and the *Categories*, if he wrote that work) that focal meaning held some interest for philosophers, neither there nor in the rest of the *Organon* is there any hint of the use to which the idea is put in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*." Guilym Ellis Lane Owen, "Logic and

that expresses the logical definition of the flower: “A flower is a plant that possesses a stamen.” The logical definition is composed of a genus term (“plant”) plus a differentia (“possesses a stamen”). The genus term indicates the class of which the subject is a member and separates the subject from all other kinds of entities. Flowers are neither bricks nor numbers nor animals. The differentia identifies the subject of the logical definition as its own proper subclass within the genus. Flowers are plants but differ from all other kinds of plants in virtue of their possessing stamens.

1.1.2 *Categories*: Univocal and Equivocal Predication

The first chapter of *Categories* uses this logical terminology to distinguish univocal from equivocal predication.⁴ Things are ‘univocals’ if they share not only a common “name” (ὄνομα) or term, but also the same logical definition corresponding to

Metaphysics in some Earlier Works of Aristotle," in *Logic, Science and Dialectic*, ed. Martha Nussbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 189.

⁴ There are two important points to note. First, in *Categories*, I.1 (1a1-15) Aristotle actually distinguishes three possible relations: equivocal (ὁμώνυμα), univocal (συνώνυμα) and denominative (παρώνυμα). The Oxford edition translates these Greek terms more literally as “homonymous,” “synonymous,” and “paronymous” however I have used Latinate translations for sake of simplicity in comparing Aristotle’s meaning with the Scholastic usage. Second, denominative or paronymous predication need not concern us here since it does not figure into Aristotle’s solution to the problem of the scientific status of metaphysics. As Owen notes, paronymous predication must not be conflated with Aristotle’s πρὸς ἓν equivocality: “Nor does focal meaning find formal recognition in the class of paronyms which is introduced in the *Categories* and recognized in the *Topics*, for the definition of paronyms is merely grammatical. It shows, not how subordinate senses of a word may be logically affiliated to a primary sense, but how adjectives can be manufactured from abstract nouns by modifying the word-ending.” *Ibid.*, 188.

that term.⁵ In other words, p is predicated univocally of S and T if and only if it signifies the same genus and species of them both as when, for instance, ‘human’ is predicated of Socrates and Plato.

Things are ‘equivocals’ if the name is predicated of them both, but they do not share the same logical definition corresponding to that name. In other words, p is predicated equivocally of S and T if and only if “ S is p ” and “ T is p ” but S and T are not p in the same sense. For example, ‘human’ is predicated equivocally of Socrates and of Rodin’s *Thinker* because it signifies two different things. “Socrates is a human” is equivalent to “Socrates is a rational animal,” whereas “Rodin’s *Thinker* is a human” is equivalent to “Rodin’s *Thinker* is a statue of a rational animal.”

1.1.3 Categories: Essential and Accidental Predication

The third idea *Categories* introduces is the distinction between essential and accidental predicates. Essential predicates identify something that inheres in its subject necessarily. If “a human being is a rational animal,” then rationality inheres in all human beings, as Aristotle would say, “universally ($\kappa\alpha\theta’\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron$) and as such ($\eta\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron$).”⁶ Socrates cannot cease being rational without immediately ceasing thereby to be a human.

⁵ On Aristotle’s account, the first chapter of the categories deals with classes of things, (i.e. it is two things that are ‘equivocals’ or ‘univocals’). For clarity’s sake, I speak about univocity and equivocity as different in which a predicate is applied to two different subjects. This introduces no serious change to Aristotle’s meaning because if two things are ‘equivocals’ this simply means that the same predicate applies to them equivocally. Apparently this was also Boethius’ solution, cf. E. J. Ashworth, “Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: Aquinas in Context,” *Mediaeval Studies* 54 (1992): 97-98.

⁶ *Posterior Analytics* I, 4 (73b26-27).

Of course, many other predicates also apply to Socrates that do not predicate something necessary of him, such as 'white' or 'hairy'. These "accidental" predicates express attributes only contingently present within their subjects. Thus, for instance, Socrates can be tattooed red or lift his arm or get married without ceasing to be a human being.

1.1.4 Categories: The Ten Categories

The ten categories are ten different kinds of predicates that can be applied to a subject. The most important is the category of substantial predicates, which express the essence or logical definition of their subject.⁷

Besides the category of substance, Aristotle enumerates nine categories of accidents in *Categories* I.4, (1b25): quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and passion. There is an ontological asymmetry between substances and accidents in that substances are basic and exist by themselves. Accidents exist as modifications of substances and therefore they depend ontologically upon inhering in some substance as a subject.

⁷ Aristotle also distinguishes between primary and secondary substances in *Categories* I.5. Primary substances are concrete particulars like Socrates. Secondary substances are the abstract logical definitions of the kinds of particulars, e.g. "humanity." Although Aristotle's statements in *Categories* link substance and essence together quite straightforwardly, he qualifies this link in *Metaphysics* VII, where he identifies substance with the composite of form and matter rather than with form alone, as *Categories* seems to suggest. Though problematic, this debate need not be resolved here.

1.2 Posterior Analytics

With these four concepts from the *Categories* in place, we can now turn to Aristotle's understanding of a science in *Posterior Analytics*. There are three points worthy of particular consideration: (1) the notion of the "elements" of a science; (2) the logical requirements of a scientific syllogism; (3) the notion of commensurately universal middle terms; and (4) the limitation of every science to its own subject genus.

1.2.1 Posterior Analytics: The Elements of a Science

In *Posterior Analytics* I.10, Aristotle says that every science has three "elements":

- (i) That which it posits, the subject genus whose essential attributes it examines;
- (ii) The so-called axioms, which are primary premises of its demonstration;
- (iii) The attributes, the meaning of which it assumes.⁸

Thus, for example, the science of Botany will posit a subject genus "plant" whose attributes it will investigate by means of scientific syllogisms built up from axioms. Our concern is with the notion of a 'subject genus' and why it is the case that every science is restricted to making demonstrations of its subject genus. However to explicate the meaning of this "element" of a science, we must first investigate the meaning of the other two.

1.2.2 Posterior Analytics: The Requirements of a Scientific Syllogism

⁸ *Posterior Analytics*, I.10, 76b13-16. Numbering changed to avoid confusion with the forgoing example.

For Aristotle a science is an organized body of demonstrations that produces certain knowledge of the causes of things by means of scientific syllogisms. Aristotle places three restrictions on scientific syllogisms. First, in order for the conclusion of the syllogism to be certain it must follow validly from certain first principles. Second, the premises must be certain. Because Aristotle holds the desired conclusions of a scientific syllogism to a very high epistemological standard, he introduces very rigorous demands on what count as good premises. The premises of the scientific syllogism must be “true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion, which is further related to them as cause and effect.”⁹ The requirement that the premises be connected causally to the conclusion insures that the syllogism genuinely manifests the cause of the phenomenon under investigation, not merely some accidental correlation. Third, there must be some middle term to connect the premises to the conclusion.

Let us take the following as an instance of a scientific syllogism:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| (1) Anything that possesses a stamen is a flower. | <i>All b's are c's.</i> |
| (2) All daisies possess a stamen; therefore, | <i>All a's are b's.</i> |
| (3) All daisies are flowers. | <i>∴ All a's are c's.</i> |

The conclusion follows from the premises by a valid ‘Barbara’ syllogism and the first premise fulfills the criterion of immediacy and evidence because it is a logical definition. The second premise presumably comes from empirical investigation of actual daisies, which is why biology is still an *a posteriori* science. Moreover, the syllogism demonstrates a formal cause: daisies are flowers *because* they have stamens. Finally,

⁹ *Posterior Analytics* I.2, 71b20-22.

there is a middle term ('possesses a stamen') that connects the premises to the conclusion necessarily.

1.2.3 *Posterior Analytics*: Univocally Predicable Middle Terms

These middle terms are presumably "attributes" in the sense that Aristotle mentions as the third "element" of a scientific demonstration in I.10. Moreover, Aristotle explicitly links the middle terms of scientific syllogisms to the causes the syllogism attempts to demonstrate.¹⁰ Aristotle says regarding these middle terms,

Demonstrative knowledge must be knowledge of a necessary nexus, and therefore must clearly be obtained through a necessary middle term; otherwise its possessor will know neither the cause nor the fact that his conclusion is a necessary conclusion.¹¹

In other words, the validity of a scientific syllogism depends on the middle term being necessarily true of its subject.¹² Aristotle develops a special technical term for the kind of attributes capable of being the necessary middle terms for a scientific syllogism. He names such attributes "commensurately universal (καθόλου) attributes" and characterizes them as attributes that "belongs to every instance of its subject, and to every instance essentially (καθ' αὐτό) and as such (ἐν αὐτό)" because "commensurate universals inhere necessarily in their subject."¹³ The necessary connection of the

¹⁰ Cf. *Posterior Analytics*, II.2, 90a7-9: "In all our research we seek either if there is a middle term or what the middle term is. For the middle term is the cause, and this is in every case what is sought."

¹¹ *Posterior Analytics* I.6, 75a13-15.

¹² *Posterior Analytics* I.6, 75a27-37.

¹³ *Posterior Analytics*, I.4, 73b26-28.

commensurately universal attribute to its subject guarantees the certainty of the scientific syllogism.¹⁴

The significance commensurately universal middle terms for the question of how to construe metaphysics as an Aristotelian science is this: for commensurately universal attributes to be middle terms they must be predicable univocally of their subjects. If, for instance, ‘possessing a stamen’ were predicated equivocally of ‘flower’ and ‘daisy’, there could never be a valid demonstration that daisies are flowers, because the equivocation of the term would make all such demonstrations fallacious.¹⁵

Consider the following two arguments:

All human beings are mortal,

Socrates is a human being,

Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

All human beings are mortal,

Rodin’s *Thinker* is a human being,

Therefore, Rodin’s *Thinker* is mortal.

The argument to the left is valid, because the middle term ‘human being’ is applied univocally to ‘mortal’ and ‘Socrates’. The argument to the right is invalid just because ‘human being’ is equivocal. Rodin’s *Thinker* is not a human being in the relevant sense because mortality is a commensurately universal attribute of rational animals and Rodin’s *Thinker* is not any sort of animal at all.

¹⁴ Note also that the commensurately universal attribute in this example syllogism is also a differentia. A differentia will always be a commensurately universal attribute because all flowers of necessity possess a stamen. However, not all commensurately universal attributes are differentia. ‘Mortality’ is a commensurately universal attribute of humanity, but mortality is not a differentia.

¹⁵ Aristotle recognizes equivocation as a kind of fallacy in *Sophistical Refutations* IV (165b25-26).

1.2.4 *Posterior Analytics*: The Subject Genus

This example exposes the meaning of Aristotle's restriction of every science to its own subject genus. If commensurately universal attributes must be predicably univocally in order to serve as the middle terms of the demonstration, then all demonstrations must be restricted to one "subject genus" precisely because the attribute would be predicated equivocally of things in different genera.¹⁶ In other words, the syllogism about the *Thinker* is fallacious precisely because it illegitimately transfers a demonstration properly belonging to the genus 'animal' to a different genus that does not share the same commensurately universal attributes.

This restriction causes a problem for a science of being qua being. If there were a universal science of being, one would assume on the basis of the *Posterior Analytics* that it would necessarily be concerned with one universal genus 'being' which would be univocally predicably of absolutely everything, just as "plant" is univocally predicably of all plants. However, Aristotle rejects the idea of a universal genus of being univocally predicably of everything, rather, "being is said in many ways (το ὄν πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον)."¹⁷

1.3 *Being is not a Genus*

¹⁶ Cf. *Posterior Analytics*, I.7, (75a39-b2).

¹⁷ *Physics*, I.2, (185b6-7) among other places.

That being is not a genus is a point Aristotle's never tires of reiterating.¹⁸ Aristotle's reasons for this claim arise from his rejection of Parmenides and Plato.¹⁹ There are two components of Aristotle's thesis: first, his dismantling of Parmenides' argument for monism; second, Aristotle's own positive argument that making being a genus leads to a contradiction.

1.3.1 *Physics* I: Against Parmenides

David Sedley analyzes Parmenides's arguments for monism as relying upon two basic laws:

Law 1. There are no half-truths. No proposition is both true and false. No question can be coherently answered "Yes and no."

Law 2. No proposition is true if it implies that, for any x , " x is not" is, was or will be true.²⁰

Sedley's formulation of Law 1 comes from Parmenides's statement: "The choice about these things lies in the following: (it) is, or (it) is not."²¹ Presumably, Parmenides means for this statement to present the reader with a clear disjunction between being and non-being. The effect of this claim, according to Sedley, is that Parmenides "can only contemplate total being or total not-being."²²

¹⁸ Aristotle says this phrase at least 11 times in the *Metaphysics* alone: III.2 (1003b5); IV.7 (1017a22); IV.11 (1019a5); IV.28 (1024b13); V.2 (1026a33); VI.1 (1028a10); VII.2 (1042b25); VIII.1 (1045b33); VIII.10 (1051a34); X.3 (1060b32); X.8 (1064b15).

¹⁹ Plato implies that there is a single form of 'being' in *Sophist* 254a.

²⁰ David Sedley, "Parmenides and Melissus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. A. A. Long (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 115-16.

²¹ Parmenides, B.VII.15-16, qtd. in *ibid.*, 115.

²² *Ibid.*

The intuition supporting Law 2 is that it is impossible to speak coherently about non-being, for the goddess says to Parmenides's character in the poem: "For you could not know that which does not exist (because it is impossible) nor could you express it."²³ There is simply nothing coherent to say about non-being.

If one admits these two laws, then Parmenides has what he seeks to prove. To illustrate Parmenides' argument that change is impossible, suppose we have an unpainted pot we wish to paint red. In order for a change to occur, some *S* that is not-*p* must become *p*. However, according to Parmenides's Law 1, *S* is necessarily either *p* or not-*p*. The pot either "is red" or "is not-red," there is no middle ground. By Law 2, however, no proposition about not-*p* can be true; therefore, *S* is *p*. Moreover, *S* must be *p* necessarily and eternally because Law 2 implies there cannot be any moment at which "S is not-*p*" is true. Therefore our pot must be red already, sensory evidence, notwithstanding.

Using very similar arguments Parmenides attempts to show that the whole of reality is one, ungenerated, undifferentiated, unchanging, spherical whole. Change, motion, and multiplicity are mere illusions that demonstrate the utter unreliability of the senses to lead a person to knowledge of the truth.

The aim of Aristotle's philosophical project is exactly contrary to Parmenides. Whereas Parmenides produces arguments to show the various perplexities that come from sense data, Aristotle's goal is to show how knowledge comes through the senses

²³ Leonardo Tarán, *Parmenides: A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), 32.

and he calls it an example of “intellectual weakness,” “to maintain that all things are at rest, and to disregard sense-perception in an attempt to show the theory reasonable.”²⁴

Aristotle does not simply ignore Parmenides’s argument, of course. In *Physics* I.2 Aristotle notes that the trick to defeating Parmenides is simply to admit that the terms ‘being’ and ‘one’ are “said in many ways.”²⁵ Aristotle agrees with what Sedley calls Parmenides’s second law, but disagrees with the all-or-nothing nature of Parmenides’s first Law, which requires “being” be predicated univocally of all beings.

Why is “being” not univocally predicable of everything that is? Aristotle’s theory of the categories now comes to the rescue. A pot can be a “being” in the sense of being a substance simultaneously as it is a non-being in the sense that it lacks the quality “red”. Thus, the pot can proceed from a state of not being red to being red without being a non-being *simpliciter*.

In the interpretation of his ten categories in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says the ten categories name the ten highest genera of the beings that fall under them. Therefore, “being” is not one universal, master genus univocally predicable of each of the categories because each of the ten categories are “being” in a different way.

1.3.2 *Metaphysics* III: A Second Argument that Being is not a Genus

Besides his rejection of Parmenides in the *Physics*, Aristotle also offers a very condensed, but powerful *reductio ad absurdum* argument that being cannot be a genus in *Metaphysics* III.3.

²⁴ Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII.3 253a32-b2.

²⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, I.2, 185b6-7.

The argument begins with two premises:

(1) “The differentiae of any genus must each of them both have being and be one.” *Premise*

(2) “It is not possible for the genus to be predicated of the differentiae taken apart from the species.”²⁶ *Premise*

In support of the first premise, note that for a differentia to divide a genus into a species, it must actually exist. The second premise is more difficult. A differentia ‘taken apart from the species’ seems to mean a differentia considered by itself. For instance, if ‘possessing a stamen’ is the differentia that separates the genus ‘plant’ into the species ‘flower’, then one can predicate ‘plant’ of flowers, but not of the differentia ‘possessing a stamen’ itself. The differentia is something other than the genus, which divides the genus.²⁷

(3) Suppose that being were a genus containing all other beings as its species.

Assumption for reductio.

(4) The differentiae that divide the genus “being” into its species must have being and be one. *By (1) and (3)*

(5) But it is not possible for the genus “being” to be predicated of its differentiae.

By (2) and (3)

Now we have a contradiction between (4), which asserts that the differentiae of the genus “being” are themselves beings, and (5), which asserts that ‘being’ is not predicable of them. Therefore, the assumption must have been false and consequently,

(6) Being is not a genus. *Conditional proof (3)-(5)*

²⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, III.3, (998b21-27).

1.4 Metaphysics as a Science of Being qua Being

If being is not a universal genus and is not univocal to the ten categories, one would assume there could be no universal science of 'being'. Based on the *Posterior Analytics*, any such science would necessarily fall to the fallacy of equivocation. In fact, Aristotle himself rejects a universal science of being in *Eudemian Ethics* I.8 for precisely this reason.²⁸ Likewise, in *Sophistical Refutations*, he seems to make philosophical reflection on being a matter of dialectic rather than scientific demonstration precisely because it is "not concerned with any definite genus."²⁹

By the time he wrote *Metaphysics* IV, however, Aristotle had changed his mind. *Metaphysics*, he says, is a science that "treats universally of being as being (καθόλου περὶ τοῦ ὄντος ἢ ὄν)" because metaphysics is concerned with the principles and causes of being.³⁰

²⁷ For more on Aristotle's ambiguous and changing understanding of the relation of differentia and genus cf. Herbert Granger, "Aristotle on Genus and Differentia," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 1 (1984).

²⁸ 1217b26-35. I follow Owen's interpretation that the *Organon* and *Eudemian Ethics* represent a point early in his career in which Aristotle rejected the idea of a universal science of being against the Platonists, cf. Owen, "Logic and Metaphysics in some Earlier Works of Aristotle."

²⁹ 172a13-15.

³⁰ *Metaphysics*, IV.1 1003a21-26. The wording calls to mind the characterization of the commensurately universal attributes in *Posterior Analytics* I.4 as attributes that apply "essentially (καθ' αὐτό) and as such (ἢ αὐτό)" to their subjects as well as the demand that a scientific syllogism manifest the cause.

Aristotle has not changed his mind about whether or not being is a genus, however. But, if being is not a genus, what provides the requisite unity to the notion of being to allow it to become the subject of a science? Aristotle answers:

The term "being" is said in many ways, but with reference to one thing and one definite nature (πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν), and not equivocally . . .³¹

In other words, although “being” is not univocal to the ten categories, neither is it purely equivocal. Rather it is predicated “with reference to one thing” (πρὸς ἓν). Thus, the term “being” applies to each of the ten categories, but not equally because of the ontological asymmetry between substances and accidents. “Being” is said primarily of substances and in a secondary sense of accidents because accidents are modifications of substances.

If we wish to give a formal description, πρὸς ἓν predication occurs when property p , which is predicated of S primarily, is also predicated of T in some secondary way. The two senses of p are related because T somehow depends on S for its being p .³² This πρὸς ἓν predication provides the requisite unity for a concept of being to allow the existence of one science of being without making being a genus:

³¹ *Metaphysics*, IV.2, 1003a34-b14. The Oxford translation of the first line reads: “The term ‘being’ is used in various senses, but with reference to one central idea and one definite characteristic, and not as merely a common epithet.” However, this translation seems to miss the point I take Aristotle to be making: namely, although ‘being’ is not predicated univocally of every being, this is not a case of pure equivocation since the term is predicated in a πρὸς ἓν fashion. Cf. the original: “τὸ δὲ ὄν λέγεται μὲν πολλαχῶς, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐχ ὁμωνύμως . . .”

³² *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 6, 1096b26-31 makes πρὸς ἓν predication a type of intentional equivocation. For more information on this and the divisions of equivocation transmitted to the Latin world through Boethius cf. Alain de Libera, “Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l’analogie de l’être,” *Les Études Philosophiques* 13 (1989): 321. See also

For not only in the case of things which are said with respect to one thing (τῶν καθ' ἓν λεγομένων) does the investigation belong to one science, but also in the case of things which are said with reference to one nature (τῶν πρὸς μίαν λεγομένων φύσιν); for even these in a sense are said with respect to one thing (λέγονται καθ' ἓν).³³

The πρὸς ἓν predication allows an attribute to be predicated of things in diverse genera in a non-equivocal way. Aristotle is not arguing that there really is some commensurately universal attribute predicable of all beings (as would be the case if being were a genus), rather he is saying that the πρὸς ἓν relation between substance as the primary and accidents as the secondary senses of “being” provides sufficient non-generic unity to make a science of being qua being possible.

Aristotle then proposes an illustration of his point that became a commonplace in all the medieval discussions of the topic:

Thus as the term "healthy" always relates to health (either as preserving it or as producing it or as indicating it or as receptive of it), and as "medical" relates to the art of medicine (either as possessing it or as naturally adapted for it or as being a function of medicine) . . . And so, just as there is one science of all healthy things, so it is true of everything else.³⁴

In Aristotle's example, medicine is one single science because it considers “health.” “Health” applies primarily to bodies, but secondarily to urine and medicines as the

Ashworth, "Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: Aquinas in Context," 100-05.

³³ *Metaphysics*, IV.2, 1003a34-b14. I have modified the Oxford translation to make it more literal. The Oxford translation reads: “For not only in the case of things which have one common notion does the investigation belong to one science, but also in the case of things which are related to one common nature; for even these in a sense have one common notion.”

³⁴ *Metaphysics*, IV.2, 1003a34-b15.

indication and causes of the health of the body. The $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ relation of the various senses of “health” is what makes possible a single science that considers urine, medicine, and bodies, even though they all belong to different categories. Likewise, metaphysics is a single science that considers “being” even though the name “being” applies to things that fall under separate categories.

How then can one construe metaphysics as a science? Aristotle’s answer seems to be to weaken the concept of a science that he developed in the *Posterior Analytics* very slightly. Some sciences do not have one single subject genus, but rather a non-generic kind of subject matter unified by a $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ predication. Aristotle seems to think that the non-generic unity of $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ predication is sufficient to keep the demonstrations of the science from falling victim to the fallacy of equivocation by illegitimately transferring demonstrations from one genus to another.

1.5 Metaphysics as Theology

Aristotle’s account of $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ predication also helps resolve the second major interpretive question, namely how to reconcile Aristotle’s description of metaphysics as a universal science of being qua being with his identification of metaphysics as the particular science of separate substances.

In *Metaphysics* VI, Aristotle distinguishes metaphysics from the other theoretical disciplines is because of the nature of its subject matter. Natural science deals with what is material and movable; mathematics with what is immovable, and “probably not separable, but embodied in matter;” whereas first philosophy treats of what is

immovable and separate from matter.³⁵ Aristotle also says that first philosophy is the highest science because it treats of the highest genus and the most divine entities.³⁶

How can the universal science also be a science of one particular genus?

Aristotle's answer is that first philosophy is universal just because it is first:

We answer that if there is no substance other than those which are formed by nature, natural science will be the first science; but if there is an immovable substance, the science of this must be prior and must be first philosophy, and universal in this way, because it is first. And it will belong to this to consider being *qua* being—both what is and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being.³⁷

Although Aristotle himself does not say so explicitly, the Greek commentators understand this to mean that there is a $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ relation between the separate substances and the material substances insofar as the separate substances are the causes and principles of all the rest.³⁸ On this account, the separate substances are the subject genus of metaphysics because they are “being” in the primary sense to which all other “beings” are attributed in a secondary sense. Thus, the neo-Platonic resolution

³⁵ *Metaphysics* VI.1 (1026a6-32).

³⁶ *Metaphysics* VI.1 (1026a18-22): “There must, then, be three theoretical philosophies, mathematics, natural science, and theology . . . and the highest science must deal with the highest genus, so that the theoretical sciences are superior to the other sciences, and this to the other theoretical sciences.”

³⁷ *Metaphysics* VI.1 (1026a27-32).

³⁸ For a history of the Greek commentators like Theophrastus and Alexander of Aphrodisias, see Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1951), 7-10. This resolution from the Greek commentators has textual warrant, as Aristotle implies that metaphysics is a search for “the first principles and the highest causes” of being *qua* being in *Metaphysics* IV.1 (1003a26-31). Aristotle himself does not view the unmoved mover as the

of the problem is to identify the divine nature with the subject of metaphysics in the technical sense required by Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*.

efficient cause of the cosmos, but the neo-Platonists did and this allowed them to understand the divine as the principle of all other beings.

Chapter 2. Avicenna and Thomas

As we saw in the last chapter, the neo-Platonists extended Aristotle's notion of $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ predication from the case of substances and accidents to describe the relation between ordinary substances and the divine nature in order to identify the science of metaphysics with theology. For our purposes here, however, it is not the solution of the neo-Platonists which is most important, but that of Avicenna who emphatically rejects the identification of the divine nature and the subject of metaphysics. The first section of this chapter investigates Avicenna's reason for departing from Aristotelian orthodoxy and the two consequences of this departure. In the second half of the chapter, we will turn to Thomas Aquinas's reaction to Avicenna in his treatment of the subject matter of metaphysics and the relationship of Thomas's understanding of metaphysics to his doctrine of analogy.

2.1 Avicenna

At first glance, Avicenna's position seems remarkably close to Aristotle. Avicenna agrees with Aristotle that (i) being is not a genus and (ii) is not said in the same way (*aequaliter*) of the categories, but rather (iii) is predicated in a prior sense of substances and in a posterior sense of accidents,¹ and that (iv) there is one science of metaphysics in just the same way as there is one science of medicine.² What Avicenna

¹ What Aristotle calls $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ predication appears in the Latin editions of Avicenna as predication *per prius et posterius*, which becomes the standard scholastic way to refer to $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ predication.

² Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia Prima: I-IV*, ed. S. Van Riet, *Avicenna Latinus* (Louvain: Peeters, 1977), 40 (I, 5). "Dicemus igitur nunc quod quamvis ens, sicut scisti, non sit genus nec

rejects is the way the Neo-Platonic commentators explained Aristotle's identification of metaphysics and theology. Avicenna's rejection of the Neo-Platonic solution comes from his stricter understanding of a science.

2.1.1 Avicenna's Circularity Objection

Avicenna's argument rejecting the neo-Platonists references *Posterior Analytics* I.10 to say that every science has three elements: a subject, something sought in the science, and some principles conceded in the science.³ According to Avicenna's view God is what is sought in the science of metaphysics not its subject, because God's existence is proven in the science of metaphysics. Because the subject is something presupposed in a science, if God were the subject of metaphysics, then there would be a vicious circularity in which God was presupposed and sought in the same science.⁴

What then is the subject of metaphysics if not God? Avicenna answers by returning to Aristotle's method of distinguishing metaphysics from the other sciences in

praedicatum aequaliter de his quae sub eo sunt, tamen intentio in qua convenient secundum prius et posterius; primum autem est quidditati quae est in substantia, deinde ei quod est post ipsam. Postquam autem una intentio est ens secundum hoc quod assignavimus, sequuntur illud accidentalia quae ei sunt propria, sicut supra diximus. Et ideo eget aliqua scientia in qua tractetur de eo, sicut omni sanativo necessaria est aliqua scientia."

³ Ibid., 3 (I, 1). ". . . et quod in ceteris scientiis est aliquid quod est subiectum, et quod aliqua sunt quae inquiruntur in eis, et quod principia aliqua conceduntur in eis ex quibus componitur demonstratio." Cf. *Posterior Analytics* I.10 76b11-16.

⁴ Ibid., 4 (I, 1). "Dico ergo impossibile esse ut ipse Deus sit subiectum huius scientiae, quoniam subiectum omnis scientiae est res quae conceditur esse, et ipsa scientia non inquit nisi dispositiones illius subiecti, et hoc notum est ex aliis locis. Sed non potest concedi quod Deus sit in hac scientia ut subiectum, imo quaesitum est in ea."

Metaphysics VI.1. After examining natural science, mathematics, and logic, he concludes that there must be a science that considers substances, numbers, and categories not merely insofar as they are substances, numbers, etc., but insofar as they are beings.⁵ However, neither substances, nor numbers, nor logical categories can be subject of metaphysics for the same reason that God could not be. Therefore, the subject of metaphysics must be something different from these, but common to all of them and which all of them presuppose.

According to Avicenna, the only thing substances, accidents, etc. have in common is that they are all beings. Thus the subject of the science which considers them all must be this universal intention of “being” common to them all, which Avicenna calls *ens commune*.⁶ Avicenna inserts this understanding of *ens commune* into Aristotle’s claim that metaphysics is a science of *ens inquantum ens*: *ens commune* is the same thing as *ens inquantum ens* because they both name the most universal notion of being which is common to all things.⁷

Brown rightly points out that a significant difference between Avicenna and Aristotle here.

⁵ Ibid., 10 (I.2). “Deinde consideratio de substantia inquantum est ens vel est substantia, vel de corpore inquantum est substantia, et de mensura et numero inquantum habent esse et quomodo habent esse, et de rebus formalibus quae non sunt in materia, vel, si sint in materia, non tamen corporea, et quomodo sunt illae, et quis modus est magis proprius illis separatim per se debet haberi.”

⁶ Ibid., 12 (I, 2). “Sed non potest poni eis subiectum commune, ut illorum omnium sint dispositiones et accidentalia communia, nisi esse. Quaedam enim eorum sunt substantiae, et quaedam quantitates, et quaedam alia praedicamenta; quae non possunt habere communem intentionem qua certificantur nisi intentionem essendi.”

⁷ Ibid. “Igitur ostensum est tibi ex his omnibus quod ens, inquantum est ens, est commune omnibus his, et quod ipsum debet poni subiectum huius magistri.”

When Avicenna speaks of the concept of being as prior to agent, patient, or to any other category; when he says that ‘being’ is *one* intention in which its inferiors agree *secundum prius et posterius*, he is telling us something more than Aristotle’s example of ‘health’ tells us when taken at its literal value. Avicenna is telling us that Aristotle’s comparison must not be taken in the sense that ‘being’ like ‘health’ has a unity of extrinsic attribution.⁸

The significance of the change between extrinsic and intrinsic attribution will be explored more fully in the discussion of Thomas Aquinas below. Meanwhile, the significance of Avicenna’s departure from Aristotle is clear in the two consequences he draws from the notion of *ens commune* as the subject of metaphysics. First, *ens commune* does not have principles. Second, it is the first concept in the intellect.

2.1.3 *Ens Commune* Has No Principles

The first important consequence of Avicenna’s view on the subject of metaphysics is that “being” in the sense that it is common to all other entities cannot have a principle.⁹ Whereas Aristotle had characterized metaphysics as a science in search of the principles of being, Avicenna explicitly denies that there are any such principles.¹⁰

⁸ Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," 118.

⁹ Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia Prima: I-IV*, 14 (I, 2). "Deinde principium non est principium omnium entium. Si enim omnium entium esset principium, tunc esset principium sui ipsius; ens autem in se absolute non habet principium; sed habet principium unumquodque esse quod scitur."

¹⁰ Cf. *Metaphysics* IV.1 (1003a26-31).

2.1.4 Avicenna on the First Object of the Intellect

The second important consequence of Avicenna's view is the idea that being is the first object of the intellect. For Avicenna being is something "imprinted by a first impression" on the intellect.¹¹ If being is a concept common to all entities absolutely, it must also be the first concept, because if something were prior to *ens commune*, then that thing would also have to be prior to the most universal notion of being, which is impossible. The implication of this view, according to Brown, is that "no concept is prior to the concept of being."¹²

2.2 Thomas Aquinas

This second half of chapter two briefly investigates two aspects of Thomas's thought crucial for the interpretation of Henry of Ghent. The first is Thomas's elaboration of the doctrine of analogy. The second aspect of Thomas's thought important for Henry is Thomas's response to Avicenna's circularity objection and his reduction of Avicenna's *ens commune* to created being.

Alongside the thorny philosophical problems Avicenna's interpretation of Aristotle raises, the exigencies of Christian theology add another dimension to the

¹¹ Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia Prima: I-IV*, 31-32 (I, 5). "Dicemus igitur quod ens et re et necesse talia sunt quod statim imprimuntur in anima prima impressione, quae non acquiritur ex aliis notioribus se, sicut credulitas quae habet prima principia, ex quibus ipsa provenit per se, et est alia ab eis, sed propter ea."

problem of analogy for Thomas and Henry. How is it possible to use words drawn from composite, finite, immanent creatures to make positive affirmations about an infinite, simple, transcendent God? Henry and Thomas both use the doctrine of analogy to resolve not only the question of the subject matter of metaphysics, but also this related problem about the adequacy of theological language.

My interpretation of Thomas focuses on three major texts taken in chronological order of composition. The first is d. 19, q. 5 of the first book of his *Sentences* commentary; the second is a. 13 of the *prima pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*.¹³ These two sections explain Thomas's theory of analogy and then the third subsection will apply Thomas's understanding of analogy to his views on the subject of metaphysics based on the proemium of *Metaphysics* commentary.

2.2.1 | Sent. d. 19, q. 5

In d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 Thomas considers the question whether all things are true by uncreated truth. (*Utrum omnia sint vera veritate increata?*) The first argument that all things are true by uncreated truth uses the familiar Aristotelian medical example: just as health is numerically one thing by which the health of an animal, his urine and his diet

¹² Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," 117.

¹³ In the interest of space and time, I am ignoring several other texts and the evolution of Thomas's own thought. For more details on this cf. Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 66-81.

are all called healthy, so are all things said to be true by the one uncreated notion of truth.¹⁴

In response to this argument, Thomas notes that a term can be analogous between two things in three ways:

(1) *Secundum intentionem et non secundum esse.*

(2) *Secundum esse et non secundum intentionem.*

(3) *Secundum intentionem et secundum esse.*¹⁵

Thomas says case (1) obtains when “one intention is referred to many things *per prius et posterius*” as the intention of health is referred to an animal, urine and diet in different ways.¹⁶

Case (2) obtains when “many are made equal in the intention of some common feature, but that common feature does not exist in one *ratio* in all of them . . .”¹⁷ Thus, a logician would say that “body” is predicated univocally of bodies, even though the

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, (d. 19, q. 5, a. 2). “Videtur quod omnia sint vera una veritate quae est veritas increata. Sicut enim dictum est in solutione praecedentis articuli, verum dicitur analogice de illis in quibus est veritas, sicut sanitas de omnibus sanis. Sed una est sanitas numero a qua denominatur animal sanum, sicut subjectum ejus, et medicina sana sicut causa ejus, et urina sana sicut signum ejus. Ergo videtur quod una sit veritas quae omnia dicuntur vera.” English translations of text from the *Sentences* commentary are my own.

¹⁵ I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1, Cf. Ashworth, “Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: Aquinas in Context,” 128-30.

¹⁶ I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1, “ . . . aliquid dicitur secundum analogiam tripliciter: vel secundum intentionem tantum, et non secundum esse; et hoc est quando una intentio referetur ad plura per prius et posterius, quae tamen non habet esse nisi in uno; sicut intentio sanitatis refertur ad animal, urinam, et dietam diversimode, secundum prius et posterius.”

¹⁷ I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1, “ . . . Vel secundum esse et non secundum intentionem; et hoc contingit quando plura parificantur in intentione alicujus communis, sed illud commune non habet esse unius rationis in omnibus, sicut omnia corpora parificantur in intentione corporeitas.”

metaphysician or physicist, considering a thing according to its *esse*, knows that in reality “body” is not one genus because there is not one single (metaphysical) genus under which both corruptible bodies and incorruptible bodies fall.¹⁸

Case (3) obtains when the things analogous related are the same neither in one common intention, nor in being. The term “ens” predicated analogously of substances and accidents is one example of an analogy *secundum intentionem et secundum esse*. In the same way the terms “true,” “beautiful” and all other terms analogical to God and creatures are analogical *secundum intentionem et secundum esse*.¹⁹ Thus, the argument that all things are true by uncreated truth was incorrect because the term “true” is predicated of both God and creatures *secundum intentionem et secundum esse* (Case 3) rather than *secundum intentionem et non secundum esse* (Case 1).

But why is there an analogy between God and creatures *secundum esse et secundum intentionem* (Case 3) instead of (Case 1) following the traditional Aristotelian medical example? Montaignes answers that medicine proposes a model of analogy *ad unum* concerned with an extrinsic attribution. The healthiness of a given plant comes

¹⁸ I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1, “Unde logicus, qui considerat intentiones tantum, dicit, hoc nomen corpus de omnibus corporibus univoce praedicari: sed esse hujus naturae non ejusdem rationis in corporibus corruptibilibus. Unde quantum ad metaphysicum et naturalem, qui considerant res secundum suum esse, nec hoc nomen corpus nec aliquid aliud dicitur univoce de corruptibilibus et incorruptibilibus, ut patet, 10 metaphys., ex philosopho et commentatore.”

¹⁹ I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1, “Vel secundum intentionem et secundum esse; et hoc est quando neque parificatur in intentione communi, neque in esse; sicut ens dicitur de substantia et accidente; et de talibus oportet quod natura communis habeat aliquod esse in unoquoque eorum de quibus dicitur, sed differens secundum rationem majoris vel minoris perfectionis. Et similiter dico, quod veritas, et bonitas, et omnia hujusmodi dicuntur analogice de deo et creaturis. Unde oportet quod secundum suum esse omnia haec in deo sint, et in creaturis

from something else, namely the aptitude of a certain kind of body to receive the plant as a medicine. The analogy of being, on the other hand, works by an intrinsic attribution: God is the primary instance of being because he is being *per essentiam*, and creatures are secondary because they are beings *per participationem*.²⁰ Only the analogy *secundum esse et secundum intentionem* can guarantee this intrinsic relationship between participating and participated being. For the Thomas of the *Sentences*, according to Montagnes, creaturely participation in divine being grounds the analogical relation between them.²¹

It seems then that Thomas is following Avicenna by not allowing an analogy according to extrinsic attribution to explain the relationship between the being of God and the being of creatures.²² However, Avicenna's rejection of this extrinsic attribution led him to the idea of *ens commune* as one positive thing which God and creatures seem to share univocally. Thomas, on the other hand, responds to the problem by asserting an intrinsic analogy *secundum esse et secundum intentionem* between God and creatures in virtue of creatures participating in the form of divine being (in a diminished way).

secundum rationem majoris perfectionis et minoris; ex quo sequitur, cum non possint esse secundum unum esse utrobique, quod sint diversae veritates."

²⁰ Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 61-62. "Il y a entre les êtres et Dieu une communauté d'analogie *parce que* les créatures imitent Dieu autant qu'elles le peuvent" [emphasis mine]." I follow Montagnes who understands participation to play a vital role in Thomas's understanding of analogy, rather than other Thomas scholars such as McInerney who understand the doctrine as purely logical. Cf. Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 42-59.

²¹ Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 53.

²² Cf. Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," 118.

The importance of participation in a. 19 is also apparent from Thomas's response to the third objection. The hypothetical objector quotes Book VIII of Augustine's *De trinitate*, which asks the reader to consider this and that good thing, then abstract from this and that to understand the good itself in which all good things participate, which is God.²³ According to Thomas, however the goodness of a creature is different from the goodness of God insofar as the divine goodness is universal and good in itself whereas created goodnesses are particular and good only by reference to something else (*secundum aliquid*).²⁴ We see the divine goodness or truth in particular good or true things in the same way we see an exemplar in something derived from the exemplar. This example asserts something important of the participation of creatures in God: the form of "good," "true," "being," etc. which creatures receive from God is not the same as God's own simple form which is being, good, etc. *per essentiam*, whereas creatures only possess these forms *per participationem* by reference to God.

²³ I *Sent.* q. 19, a. 5, "Praeterea, sicut se habet bonitas ad bona, ita se habet veritas ad vera. Sed omnia sunt bona una bonitate. Unde Augustinus: bonus est homo, bona est facies, bonum est hoc et illud. Tolle hoc et illud, et videbis bonum omnis boni. Unde videtur quod sit una bonitas numero in omnibus participata, secundum quam dicuntur bona. Ergo videtur quod similiter omnia dicantur vera una veritate, quae est veritas increata." Cf. Augustine, *On The Trinity: Books 8-15*, ed. Gareth Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), (VIII, 3).

²⁴ I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 ad 3. "Ad tertium dicendum, quod similiter dico de bonitate, quod est una bonitas, qua sicut principio effectivo exemplari omnia sunt bona. Sed tamen bonitas qua unumquodque formaliter est bonum, diversa est in diversis. Sed quia bonitas universalis non invenitur in aliqua creatura, sed particulata, et secundum aliquid; ideo dicit Augustinus, quod si removeamus omnes rationes particulatationis ab ipsa bonitate, remanebit in intellectu bonitas integra et plena, quae est bonitas divina, quae videtur in bonitate creata sicut exemplar in exemplato."

2.2.2 *Summa Theologiae* 1a, q. 13

Having laid out Thomas's early position from the *Sentences* commentary, we can now turn to the *Summa Theologiae*, q. 13, which is closer in order of composition to the late *Metaphysics* commentary quoted above.²⁵ There is not a dramatic change in Thomas's position between the *Sentences* commentary and the *Summa*, but the mature account does develop the position some of the earlier themes more fully.

One such development is the theory of religious language one finds in a. 13, q. 1. Because we can only come to knowledge of God from creatures, all the names that one can apply to God derive from creatures (a. 13, q. 2 ad 2). This presents a problem, because the ordinary terms we derive from creatures such as "wise" have *modi significandi* which imply complexity and subsistence. The only simple terms we can derive from creatures are abstract ones such as "wisdom," whose *modi significandi* imply abstraction. According to Ashworth,

It is precisely because of these *modi significandi* that we have so much difficulty in naming God, who is simple and subsistent at one and the same time. If we apply abstract terms to God, the *modus significandi* of subsistence is lost and the inappropriate *modus significandi* is added.²⁶

²⁵ *Summa Theologiae* dates from 1266-1273, the *Metaphysics* commentary from 1269-1272, and the *Sentences* commentary from 1252-1256 according to Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 281-88.

²⁶ E. J. Ashworth, "Signification and Modes of Signifying in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A Preface to Aquinas on Analogy," *Medieval Philosophy & Theology* 1 (1991): 48. On the importance of *modi significandi* cf. also Ashworth, "Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: Aquinas in Context."

The conclusion Thomas draws from this is that, “neither way of speaking measures up to [God’s] way of being, for in this life we do not know him as he is in himself.”²⁷

Lest one think that he relegates theological language to a purely negative role, Thomas hastens to add in the next article that creaturely words can express a truth about God because creatures receive their perfections from God:

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 as noted above. [1a, q. 4, a. 2] 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—as in a certain way the forms of inferior bodies imitate the power of the sun . . . Thus words like ‘good’ and wise’ when used of God do signify something that God really is, but they signify it imperfectly because creatures represent God imperfectly.²⁸

In other words, the creaturely word “good” can still express something true about God, namely “God is good” because creaturely goodness is like (*similis*) God’s goodness, though obviously in a less perfect way.

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Benziger Bros., 1947), (1a, q. 13, a. 1 ad 2). “. . . quamvis utraque nomina deficient a modo ipsius, sicut intellectus noster non cognoscit eum ut est secundum hanc vitam.”

²⁸ Ibid., (1a, q. 13, a. 2). “Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus in se praehabet omnes perfectionis creaturarum, quasi simpliciter et universaliter perfectus. Unde quaelibet creatura intantum eum repraesentat, et est ei similis, in quantum perfectionem aliquam habet, non tamen ita quod repraesentat eum sicut aliquid ejusdem speciei vel generis, sed sicut excellens principium, a cujus forma effectus deficient cuius tamen aliqualem similitudinem effectus consequuntur—sicut formae corporum inferiorum repraesentant virtutem solarem . . . Sic igitur praedicta nomina divinam substantiam significant, imperfecte tamen, sicut et creaturae imperfecte eam repraesentant.”

In a. 5, Thomas rejects the idea that creaturely words like “good” could be predicated univocally of a transcendent God. Nor however, could “good” be totally equivocal between God and creatures, since then there could never be any arguments about God’s goodness, as all such arguments would fall victim to the fallacy of equivocation.²⁹ The answer then is that theological language is neither equivocal, nor univocal, but analogical.

This way of using words lies somewhere between pure equivocation and simple univocity, for the word is neither used in the same sense (*Neque . . . una ratio*), as with univocal usage, nor in totally different senses (*nec totaliter diversa*), as with equivocation. The several senses of a word used analogically signify different relations to some one thing, as ‘health’ in a complexion means a symptom of health in a man, and in a diet means a cause of that health.³⁰

Note that Thomas says here that there is not one common *ratio* God and creatures share. Rather there is a priority and posteriority. God is the primary sense of all positive terms attributable to him because he prepossesses all creaturely perfections, as noted above.

Now how does Thomas’s account of analogy play into his understanding of the subject of metaphysics?

²⁹ Ibid., (1a, q. 13, a. 5 corpus).

³⁰ Ibid., (1a, q. 13, a. 5, corpus). “Et iste modus communitatis medius est inter puram aequivocationem et simplicem univocationem. Neque enim in iis quae analogice dicuntur, est una ratio, sicut est in univocis; nec totaliter diversa, sicut in aequivocis; sed nomen quod sic multipliciter dicitur, significant diversas proportiones ad aliquid unum; sicut sanum, de urina dictum, significat signum sanitatis animalis, de medicia vero dictum, significant causam eiusdem sanitatis.”

2.2.3 Thomas Aquinas on the Subject of Metaphysics

Although Thomas does not answer Avicenna's circularity objection explicitly, in the proemium of his commentary on the metaphysics he does answer implicitly. Thomas begins by observing that one science considers both a genus and its causes.³¹ However, he also agrees with Avicenna that *ens commune* and not God is the subject of metaphysics. To resolve the tension between these two positions, Thomas reduces Avicenna's concept of *ens commune* as a universal intention of all being qua being to one logical intention common to all *created* being, as a proper effect of God as its cause.³² Therefore, there can be one science of metaphysics which considers *ens commune* in the sense of created being as its subject in the technical sense and God as the principle or cause of that subject.³³

Thomas's position accords more closely to Aristotle's own position in Metaphysics IV.1 that metaphysics is a science insofar as it seeks the principles and causes of being, which Avicenna denies.³⁴ Given the analysis of Thomas's doctrine of analogy above Thomas seems to believe "being" is analogous between God and

³¹ Thomas Aquinas, "In Metaphysicam," in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia* (1866), 245. "Eiusdem autem scientiae est considerare causas proprias alicuius generis et genus ipsum."

³² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, (1a2ae, q. 66, a. 5 ad 4). ". . . quia ens commune est proprius effectus causae altissimae, scilicet Dei."

³³ Thomas Aquinas, "In Metaphysicam," 245. "Unde oportet quod ad eandem scientiam pertineat considerare substantias separatas, et ens commune, quod est genus, cuius sunt praedictae substantiae communes et universalis causae. Ex quo apparet, quod quamvis ista scientia praedicta tria consideret, non tamen considerat quodlibet eorum ut subiectum, sed ipsum solum ens commune."

³⁴ Cf. *Metaphysics* IV.1, 1003a35-31.

creatures *secundum esse et secundum intentionem*, but Thomas does not make this analogous common “being” the subject of metaphysics.

In Dumont’s words, this solution “violates the requisite generality of the subject with respect to all things considered in the science and is completely inconsistent with the Avicennian reasoning that led to making being the subject of metaphysics in the first place.”³⁵ If created being is the subject of metaphysics, then there is something sought in the science—God—that does not fall under that subject.

As we shall see in chapter 3, Henry of Ghent critiques Thomas’s solution to the problem of the subject of metaphysics for this reason.

³⁵ Dumont, “Scotus’s Doctrine of Univocity,” 206.

Chapter 3. Henry of Ghent's Doctrine of Analogy

The goal of this chapter is to explicate Henry's view in order to show where Henry appropriates from Avicenna and Thomas and where he diverges from them. The crucial text for this investigation is *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum*, a. 21, q. 2 (*Utrum Deus in esse communicat cum creaturis?*) in which Henry presents his doctrine of analogy. The first three sections of this chapter investigate a. 21, q. 2 in detail. The next section investigates Henry's view on the subject of metaphysics and the key term *ens simpliciter* in its use in a. 19, q. 1.

3.1 *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum a. 21, q. 2: Objections*

According to Decorte the doctrine of analogy "constitutes the real opening of Henry's *Summa* . . . Articles 1-20 can be considered as dealing with methodological questions about the nature, scientific status of and possibility to gain human knowledge in theology."¹ In a. 21, q. 1 (*Utrum Deus habeat esse?*) Henry briefly refutes a few skeptical arguments, asserts God's existence promising a proof later, and moves on.

Of course, if God has *esse* and creatures have *esse*, one would be tempted to think that *esse* was a term that applied equally to both God and his creatures, making being a genus. Moreover, Avicenna's arguments that *ens commune* is a notion of being common to both God and creatures seem to entail something like this position.

Henry's own position will be that the being is said analogously of God and creatures, and so, following the disputation style, Henry begins with three arguments in

¹ Decorte, "Henry of Ghent on Analogy," 84.

favor of there being something common to God and creatures, two of which explicitly invoke Avicenna.

3.1.1 The First Objection

The first objection that being is common to God and creatures argues from the major premise:

That by which some things differ from a third thing and not between themselves is something common and the same for them. For, if it were not something common to them, they would differ by it from one another and would not differ in common from the third thing.²

Socrates and Plato both differ from the dog Rex but not between themselves because there is something common to them both, the form humanity. This would seem also to be the case with the relation between God and a creature, since both God and a creature,

Differ in common without qualification, in accord with our manner of understanding, from that which does not exist, which implies a pure privation of being.³

Thus, if God and a creature both differ absolutely from pure non-being, then they share something, namely the form being. If this argument were correct, “being” should be

² Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa: the Questions on God's Existence and Essence*, (articles 21-24), trans. J. Decorte and Roland J. Teske, *Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 46-47 (124vE). “Illud quo aliqua differunt ab alio et non inter se, commune et idem est illis, quia si non esset eis commune, illo differrent inter se, non communiter a tertio.” All English translations from a. 21 come from Decorte and Teske unless otherwise noted.

univocally predicable of God and a creature just as “human” is univocally predicable of Socrates and Plato.

3.1.2 The Second Objection

The second argument in favor of a community of being is a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Presume that God and creatures did not have being in common. Now,

Since every multitude has to be reduced to a unity, above the being in which God and a creature were different . . . there would be something in which they agreed (convenirent) and were one. But this is impossible, because the notion of the latter would be prior to the notion of being, which is the first notion according to Avicenna. Ergo, etc.⁴

If every multitude is part of a greater unity and if God and creatures were “beings” in a diverse sense, then there would be some super-genus of which the being of God and the being of creatures were species. However, Avicenna has proven that there can be no such super-genus, because “being” is the first notion.⁵ Therefore, God and creatures share being in common.

3.1.3 The Third Objection

³ Ibid. “Sed Deus et creatura entitate sua simpliciter differunt communiter secundum rationem intelligendi, ab eo quod non est, quod dicit puram privationem esse. Ergo, etc.”

⁴ Ibid., 46-47 (124vE-24rE). “Quare, cum omnem multitudinem oportet reduci ad unitatem, super ens in quo different Deus et creatura . . . esset aliquid in quo convinerent et essent unum. Hoc autem est impossibile, quia ratio illius esset prior ratione entis, quae prima est secundum Avicennam. Ergo, etc.”

⁵ Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia Prima: I-IV*, 31-32 (I, 5).

The third objection is the most important and the one that shows Henry's disagreement with Avicenna most clearly. The objector begins from the major premise:

Something said of many things, which is understood by itself on account of our understanding of those things, is something real and common to them (*aliquid reale commune*), because every concept is founded upon some thing.⁶

The key point of this premise is that there is a real thing to which every concept corresponds. However, if this is the case then,

Being is something of this kind, because according to Avicenna being is "imprinted by a first impression," even before there is imprinted an understanding either of God or of a creature.⁷

Thus, "being" is something common to God and creatures.

Note however, that the objector's argument implies that "being" is not merely a logical genus or shared term, but rather some real entity both God and creatures possess. If one asserts the reality of a concept of "being" prior to the determination of divine or creaturely being, as Avicenna seems to, there must be some real entity in virtue of which they are both beings in the same sense.

3.1.4 The First *Sed Contra*

The two *sed contra* arguments attempt to show that God and a creature do not have being in common. Brown observes that Henry's purpose in the article in general is

⁶ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 46-47 (124rE). "Dictum de pluribus quod habet per se intellectum propter intellectus illorum, est aliquid reale commune ad illos, quia omnis conceptus fundatur in re aliqua."

⁷ Ibid. "Ens est huiusmodi, quia secundum Avicennam ens 'imprimitur impressione prima,' etiam antequam in ipsa imprimitur intellectus aut creaturae aut Dei. Ergo, etc."

to preserve God's transcendence.⁸ This is very clear in these two very strong *sed contra* arguments.

The first argument is a *reductio ad absurdum* based on divine simplicity. Socrates and Plato have a form in common yet are not identical, but this is only possible because Socrates and Plato are composite entities. In other words, besides the form of humanity they both possess matter and various accidents that individuate them. Thus,

If, then, there were something common to God and a creature, they would differ in terms of being under that common element. There will, then be two beings in God, one in which agrees or has something common with a creature, the other in which he differs from a creature.⁹

But this is absurd because God is absolutely simple—which Henry will attempt to prove later in the *Summa*. Therefore, being cannot be common to God and creatures.

3.1.5 The Second *Sed Contra*

The second *sed contra* is crucial because it is the first occurrence in this article of the term *ens simpliciter*. The meaning of the term *ens simpliciter* is one of the crucial points of interpretation for understanding Henry's position on analogy, as we shall see below, so this passage merits close attention.

Because an accident differs from the nature of substance, to which being without qualification (*esse simpliciter*) belongs, an accident is not called "being"

⁸ Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," 121.

⁹ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 48-49 (124rE). "Si ergo esset esse aliquod commune Deo et creaturae, sub illo secundum esse different. Erit ergo duplex esse Deo, unum in quo cum creatura convenit sive communicat, aliud in quo a creatura differt."

without qualification (*simpliciter ens*). Because, however, an accident approaches substance in some way as a disposition of it, it in some way has the name “being” in common with substance so that it is called being.¹⁰

Next, the argument attempts to show a disanalogy between the relation of accident to substance and the relation of a creature to God:

But the being of a creature does not approach in any respect the nature of the creator, because there is an infinite distance between the two.¹¹

Accidents share the name ‘being’ with substances because they ‘approach’ substances by being modifications of substances. However, it is impossible for an immanent thing to ‘approach’ the transcendent God in any way; hence, there must not be any common ‘being’ that God and his creatures share. The argument here seems to imply that being could not even be analogously common to God and creatures, since any putative analogy between God and a creature involves an inappropriate violation of God’s transcendence.

3.2 Summa quaestionum ordinariarum a. 21, q. 2: Henry’s response

Henry’s own position will try to find a middle way between the objections, which argue for univocity, and the *sed contras*, which argue for equivocality. Henry’s own view is that being is predicated of God and creatures neither univocally “nor purely

¹⁰ Ibid. “Accidens quia distat a natura substantiae, cui convenit esse simpliciter, non dicitur simpliciter ens. Quia autem aliquo modo appropinquat ipsi ut dispositio ipsius, aliquo modo nomen entis communicat cum substantia, ut dicatur ens . . .”

¹¹ Ibid. “Sed esse creaturae non appropinquat in aliquo naturae creatoris, quia inter eos est infinita distantia.”

equivocally . . . but in a middle way, namely, analogically.”¹² The task of Henry’s response will be to show how being is analogically predicable of God and creatures without violating God’s transcendence. I follow Decorte in analyzing Henry’s position sketched in the response into five points.

3.2.1 “Being” is not one intention

The first paragraph of Henry’s response strongly denies that “being” is one intention or concept the ten genera of created being share.

Since being, as will be said below, does not signify some one intention common to substance and accident, but signifies in its first signification each of the ten categories, being itself cannot be common to substance and accident by any real commonality.¹³

Because there is no one common intention, neither can there be any entity substances and accidents share in virtue of which they are beings. Because God surely differs from all creatures much more than any two creatures differ from one another if there is no entity shared in common between two genera of created things, much less could there be any real thing shared in common between God and creatures.

¹² Ibid., 47.

¹³ Ibid., 48-49 (124rF). “Cum ens, ut infra dicitur, non significat aliquam unam intentionem communem substantiae et accidenti, sed significat significatione prima unumquodque decem praedicamentorum, nulla communitate reali ipsum ens potest esse commune substantiae et accidenti.”

So far, Henry does not seem to be saying anything particularly novel, as Thomas Aquinas himself affirms that there is no one common *ratio* in analogically related things as noted in §2.2.2 above.¹⁴

3.2.2 *Convenientia similitudinis* and *convenientia imitationis*

Although Henry denies that there is any one thing in common to substances or accidents, creatures or God, nevertheless the term “being” is not purely equivocal between all of these, because Henry says there is an “agreement” (*convenientia*) between them.

Henry notes that there are two kinds of *convenientia*, which correspond to the “two ways of having some form in common.”¹⁵ The first he calls the *convenientia similitudinis*, which is an agreement between two objects that participate in the same form as two white things participate in whiteness. Whiteness is univocally predicable of everything that participates in it, but for Henry, “being” is not univocally predicable of God and creatures; therefore, “being” cannot be one form in which they both participate and God and creatures do not communicate in being according to a *convenientia similitudinis*.

However, there is also a second kind of *convenientia* according to Henry, the *convenientia imitationis*.

¹⁴ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*.

¹⁵ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 48-49 (124rG). “. . . secundum quod duplex est modus communicandi aliqua in forma . . .”

The second is an agreement in form in terms of different intelligibilities. This is called an agreement of imitation (*convenientia imitationis*) and is universally found in makers and their products, in causes and their effects.¹⁶

According to Henry, there can be a likeness between God and creatures, even though they share no one entity or intention, just because God is the creator of creatures. It is also worth noting in this text that Henry takes the causal relationship between God and creatures to be just a special example of a more general principle. According to Henry, there is always a *convenientia imitationis* between a creator and the object created.

3.2.3 A *convenientia imitationis* between God and Creatures

Just as Thomas does, Henry explicitly grounds the *convenientia imitationis* between God and his creatures in God's role as their creator and efficient cause. Just as a table has some agreement with an artisan precisely because it is the artifact of the artisan, so too creatures have an agreement with God in virtue of their being God's creations:

And therefore, since God is the efficient cause of all creatures . . . every creature necessarily has an agreement with God in terms of some form, at least in terms of an imitation of form by form.¹⁷

So far, Henry's position is consistent. There is a likeness between God and creatures grounded in God's creative role, but this likeness does not consist in any real entity or

¹⁶ Ibid., 50-51 (124rG). "Alio vera est convenientia in forma secundum aliam et aliam rationem, quae dicitur convenientia imitationis et est universaliter in efficientibus et factis, causis et causatis."

¹⁷ Ibid., 50-51 (124rH). "Et ideo cum Deus sit causa effectuum omnium creaturum . . . necessario omnis creatura cum Deo secundum formam aliquam habet convenientiam, saltem secundum imitationem formae ad formam."

logical intention they share. Henry is clear that this causal ground allows one to predicate “being” of both God and creatures:

Hence, since the divine form is being itself, as will be seen below, from which all creatures borrow the name “being” insofar as the divine being is their cause, as will be said below, it is necessary to say that a creature has being in common with the creator, at least by an agreement of imitation.¹⁸

There is a difference between the case of the artisan and a table and the case of God and a creature. Even if the table resembles the artisan, there is not a common name one can attribute to them both even analogically. The artisan is *x* and the table is *y* and there is some sort of similarity between *x* and *y*. In the case of God and creatures, the situation is different because one name is said of them both.

3.2.4 Priority and Posteriority in Being

How can the same term apply to God and creatures, when Henry has explicitly said there is no real entity they share in common? Henry’s answer is that being belongs to God and creatures neither univocally, nor purely equivocally,

But being belongs to them in a middle way, namely, analogically, because it signifies one of the things it signifies primarily and principally, but signifies the other as ordered to and in relation or proportion to that other, so that it signifies primarily and principally the form by which God has being, but signifies as ordered to it the form by which a creature has being.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid. “Quare, cum forma divina sit ipsum esse, ut infra videbitur, a quo omnis creatura mutuatur nomen essendi in quantum est causa eius, ut infra dicetur, necesse est dicere quod saltem in esse convenientia imitationis communicet creatura cum creatore.”

¹⁹ Ibid., 52-53 (124r). “sed medio modo, scilicet, analogice, quia significant unum suorum significatorum primo et principaliter, alterum vero in ordine et respectu sive proportione ad illud,

In other words being is analogical between God and creatures just because it is said of them both *per prius et posterius*.

Henry then compares the analogical relationship between God and creatures with the analogical relationship between substances and accidents. The priority and posteriority involved in predicating “being” of substances and accidents is like the priority and posteriority involved in predicating “being” of God and creatures. Henry links this understanding of priority and posteriority with Aristotle’s claim in *Metaphysics* IV that “being is said in many ways, not equivocally, but all the ways are attributed to one thing and one nature.”²⁰

Henry distinguishes two different kinds of analogy. One among creaturely beings alone, in which case substance is the primary sense of being, because accidents are attributed to substances. But there is also a second analogy that includes both God and all creatures (including substances and accidents). On this more absolute level, God is the “one thing” which is the primary sense of “being.” Thus,

When being is said in its most common sense, it primarily signifies God and secondarily a creature, just as created being primarily signifies substance and secondarily an accident, but by different modes of attribution. For other beings are attributed to substance as to their one subject, but all creatures are attributed to God as to their one end, one form, and one efficient cause.²¹

ut primo et principaliter formam qua habet esse Deus, in ordine autem ad illam, formam qua habet esse creatura.”

²⁰ Ibid. “Ens dicitur multipliciter non aequivoce, sed omnes modi attribuuntur uni rei et uni naturae.” Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV.2 1003a3-34.

²¹ Ibid., 52-53 (124v). “Et secundum hunc modum ens communissime dictum primo significat Deum, secundario creaturam, sicut ens creatum primo significat substantiam, secundario accidens, sed alio et alio modo attributionis quia alia entia attribuuntur Deo ut uni fini, et uni formae et uni efficienti . . .”

Against Avicenna, Henry is arguing that the most common notion of being is not something different than God and creatures, but rather the most common notion is common to both of them because the term *ens* can receive different modes of attribution. More on these modes in the *ad 3* shortly.

3.2.5 The Order of Cognition and the Order of Being

The final point of Henry's response concerns the order of knowledge and the order of being. Paulus's interpretation draws the conclusion that for Henry there is a parallelism between the *ordo essendi* and the *ordo cognoscendi*. Decorte rightly points out, however, that this is precisely the opposite of what Henry himself explicitly says.²²

In God and a creature, however, the order of reality is different from the order of our knowledge. For in the order of reality and nature, God is prior to a creature; in the order of our knowledge, however, according to the state of this life, the creature is, on the contrary prior to God in pure and distinct natural knowledge because we come to a knowledge of God from creatures.²³

Henry and Thomas agree that our names for God are imposed from creatures. However, even though we learn about goodness from a creature first in the *ordo cognoscendi*, the goodness of God is prior to the goodness of a creature in the *ordo essendi*, because God's goodness is the primary sense of goodness to which the goodness of a creature is referred.

²² Decorte, "Henry of Ghent on Analogy," 79-80.

²³ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 54-55 (124vL). "In Deo vero et creatura, alius est ordo rei, alius vero nostrae cognitionis. Deus enim ordine rei et naturae prior est creatura, ordine vero cognitionis nostrae secundum statum vitae huius in naturali cognitione pura et distincta, e contrario prior est creatura Deo, quia ex creaturis devenimus in cognitionem Dei."

3.3 Summa quaestionum ordinarium a. 21, q. 2: Response to the Objections

Henry now turns his attention to responding to the objections. The first two objections are dispatched in short order by referring to the body of the question, but the third objection and the second *sed contra* arguments receive considerably fuller treatment.

3.3.1 ad 1 and ad 2

In response to the objection that both God and creatures differ from non-being, Henry agrees that this is true, but simply argues, “it is true according to an imitation of the divine form by the form of a creature . . . not according to an agreement of some real likeness, as has been said.”²⁴ Therefore, both God and creatures can differ absolutely from non-being without sharing any one entity. Henry answers the second objection that every diversity has to be “reduced to a unity in one of them,” namely in God whom creatures are attempting to imitate.²⁵ Against Avicenna, Henry argues that the unity in which God, creatures, substance, and accidents are contained is not some entity like *ens commune* which is different from all these things. Rather, the diversity is contained within God himself, because God is the simple source of all perfections—the diversity comes in creatures who possess these perfections in a composite,

²⁴ Ibid., 54-55 (124vM). “. . . dicendum quod verum est convenientia imitationis formae creaturae ad speciem Dei . . . non autem convenientia reali alicuius similitudinis, ut dictum est.”

²⁵ Ibid., 54-55 (124vN). “reducitur . . . non ad unitatem tertiam aliam ab illis multis . . . sed ad unitatem in altero illorum.”

participated way. Although this is not something Thomas says explicitly, Henry's explanation seems perfectly compatible with Thomas on this point.

3.3.3 *ad 3*

In response to the Avicennian objections that "being without qualification" (*ens simpliciter*) must be something common to God and creatures because "being" is the first concept, and therefore prior to the determination of God and creatures. Henry rejects the idea of a concept of being prior to the determination to God or creatures, which would include them both. Rather, Henry says,

If a human being conceives something, it is either what pertains to the being of God alone or what pertains to the being of a creature alone. But, insofar as it depends on the spoken word, each of these two concepts is naturally able to be present indifferently and equally simultaneously in what is signified by being.²⁶

The term "*ens*" can be present indifferently because of the different modes of attribution mentioned in §3.2.4 above. In the case of "*ens*" as it pertains to substances and accidents, there are two relevant modes of attribution. As predicated of a substance, the term "*ens*" receives the mode "*in se.*" As predicated of an accident, "*ens*" receives the mode "*in alio.*" The term "*ens*" itself then is indifferent to substance or accident. To put it another way, "*ens*" forms a logical genus, but not a metaphysical one. Thus, the same word "*ens*" can apply to both substances and accidents even though they are different kinds of beings. In the same way, the term "*ens*" could form a logical genus as

²⁶ Ibid., 55-57 (124vO). "Sed si aliquid concipit homo, illud est aut quod pertinet ad esse Dei tantum, aut quod pertinet ad esse creaturae tantum. Sed utrumque eorum indifferenter et aequae simul quantum est ex parte vocis natum est praesentari in significatio eius quod est esse."

applied to God and creature, but not a metaphysical genus precisely because the modes of attribution (*per se* or *per essentiam*) would be different. Once again Henry's position seems compatible with Thomas.²⁷

Note that Henry rejects the Avicennian notion of *ens commune* as something common to God and creatures in order to remain closer to Aristotle's argument against Parmenides and Melissus in *Physics* I that 'being' is not a univocal term but one that, "signifies either the being that is substance or being that is an accident."²⁸ Moreover, Henry reproves Plato for making "being" a single form and praises Aristotle as the subtler thinker in this respect.

'Being' might appear to be common to the being God and creatures because both can be conceived as 'indeterminate' in some way. This would yield a "concept" of being prior to the determination to God or creatures, but again this concept is not a real concept because God's indetermination differs from creature determination. God is negatively indeterminate because he cannot be determined; creatures are privatively indeterminate because they are in potency to become something other than they are. The truth of the matter, which Avicenna might have misunderstood, is that any concept of being prior to the determination of God and creatures is an erroneous concept and not a real one.²⁹ But, according to Henry, "a correct understanding correctly

²⁷ Cf. the discussion of I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 in chapter 2 above.

²⁸ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 56-57 (124vO). "Et ideo ubicumque ponitur in enunciatione sive exterius expressa sive in mente concepta, semper facit enunciationem esse multiplicem et distinguendam, secundum quod istam enunciationem qua dicitur ens est, distinguit philosophus primo *Physicorum* contra Parmenidem et Melissum, quod aut significat ens quod est substantia aut ens accidens."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 56-57 (124vR).

distinguishes these things by conceiving indeterminate being either negatively or privatively.”³⁰

Paulus understand this passage about the indeterminate concept of being as evidence of Henry’s turn away from orthodox Aristotelianism towards Avicenna.³¹ However, this interpretation does not commend itself since Henry seems inclined to believe that Avicenna was wrong to posit *ens commune* as a real concept of being that includes both God and creatures. Henry is adamant that there can be no such real concept, only a confused one. Both Paulus and Gómez Caffarena make this confused concept the core of Henry’s analogy; however, this interpretation suffers from a lack of textual support for Henry never links the idea of the confused concept to analogy.³²

Next, Henry refers to book VIII of Augustine’s *De trinitate*, in which Augustine tells the reader how to understand God. First, one begins by considering this and that good thing. Then if one can understand goodness *simpliciter*, one will have understood God.³³ “Similarly,” says Henry

³⁰ Ibid., 60-61 (124S).

³¹ Paulus, *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, 55-56. “Car si l’idée d’être se présent à l’intellect avant qu’elle se diversifie en idée de Dieu ou en idée de la créature, il faut bien que nous trouvions dans la notion initiale un certain contenu irréductible dont s’accommoderont les suivantes. . . Car après avoir considéré provisoirement l’analogie d’un point de vue aristotélicien, voici qu’Henri l’observe, en fidèle disciple d’Avicenne, sur le plan du concept: dans l’*Ad tertium* de la q. 21, 2 déjà citée.”

³² Ibid., 59. “1° La notion générale de l’être n’est point véritablement *un* concept, mais *deux*, confondus à tort.” Gómez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en las metafísica de Enrique de Gante*, 191. “. . . su analogía se puede definir en resumen como unidad subjetiva en un concepto confuso, al que responden realidades diversas pero ontológicamente vinculadas . . .”

³³ Cf. Augustine, *On The Trinity: Books 8-15*, (VIII.3).

If you understand this being and that being and if you understand being without qualification (*ens simpliciter*), you understand God and you do this by conceiving being without qualification and indeterminately by the indetermination of negation, as it is said.³⁴

Recall that Thomas uses this quote from Augustine in I *Sent.* d. 19 to highlight the difference between the participated and the participating notions of truth. I see no incompatibility between them on this point. If anything, it seems that Henry is simply extending Thomas's point there to make all the more clear the impossibility of any concept prior to the concept of God, which is *ens simpliciter*.

On the basis of this passage, it seems that Brown is entirely correct to identify *ens simpliciter* with God himself, the form of being from whom creatures derive the name "being", and not with Avicenna's *ens commune*.³⁵ This point is extremely important and the last section of this paper will attempt to provide even more support for it, but first we must investigate Henry's response to the *sed contra* arguments.

3.3.5 *ad 1* and *ad 2 sed contra*

Henry replies that the first *sed contra* argument has proceeded entirely correctly. The existence of a genus under which God and his creatures both fell would impugn God's simplicity, however this argument tells against univocity only and not analogy.³⁶

³⁴ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 58-59 (125rQ). "Similiter, si intelligis hoc ens et illud ens, si intelligis ens simpliciter, Deum intelligis. Et hoc concipiendo esse simpliciter et indeterminatum indeterminatione negationis, ut dictum est."

³⁵ Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," 121.

³⁶ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 60. ". . . et secundum hoc bene processit primum argumentum in oppositum."

Henry's response to the second *sed contra* argument is more extensive. Recall that the second *sed contra* argued that God is so infinitely distant from his creations that the two could not have anything in common neither by participation nor by imitation.

Henry's response also illuminates his understanding of *ens simpliciter*. Imitation is the key to understanding "being" as somehow common to God and creatures without impugning God's transcendence. It is precisely because effects somehow imitate their causes that creatures imitate God.

Henry also makes his rejection of Avicenna clear in this way: whatever our concept of "being" is, it does not arise from abstraction.

And because of that imitation [a creature] has being in common with him, as an accident has with its subject, not because the term "being" signifies something common to both of them that has been abstracted from them by the intellect, so that, in understanding this being that is God and that being that is a creature I leave aside "this" and "that" and understand the being common to them (*ens commune*), just as when I understand this man Socrates and that man Plato, I leave aside "this" and "that" and understand man without qualification (*hominem simpliciter*). For this can be done in the former case but not in the latter.³⁷

One can abstract a simple form of humanity from Socrates and Plato, but one cannot abstract a simple notion of *ens commune* by prescindendo from this and that to find a

³⁷ Ibid., 60-61 (125rT). ". . . propter quam in esse communicat cum ipso, sicut accidens cum subiecto, non quod aliquid commune ambobus ab ipsis abstractum per intellectum significetur nomine entis, ut intelligendo hoc ens quod est Deus et hoc ens quod est creatura, dimittam hoc et hoc, et intelligam ens commune ipsis, sicut cum intelligo hunc hominem Socratem et hunc Platonem, dimitto hunc et hunc, et intelligo hominem simpliciter. Hoc enim potest fieri hic, non ibi. . ."

notion of being common to God and a creature. It is clear from this then that Henry's *ens simpliciter* is not equivalent to Avicenna's *ens commune*.

3.4 Henry of Ghent on the Subject of Metaphysics

Now we turn to a. 19, q. 1 to clarify Henry's position on the subject of metaphysics and his difference from Thomas on this point. Despite this question's importance, it has received relatively little treatment from modern scholars. For instance, Paulus speaks about *ens simpliciter* in a. 21, but not in a. 19. Gómez Caffarena gives it a single paragraph. Brown does not mention it at all and it falls outside the scope of Decorte's article addressing Paulus's interpretation of a. 21. Interestingly, Stephen Dumont takes up a. 19, q. 1 to argue that Henry's doctrine of analogy to support the Paulus/Gómez Caffarena confusion interpretation of analogy.³⁸ The first half of this chapter has presented evidence that the confusion interpretation is incorrect, nevertheless, if my interpretation is correct, then I ought to be able to provide a satisfactory alternative to Dumont's reading of a. 19, q. 1.

The question at hand is whether God or something else is the subject of the science of theology. This question is important for Henry's doctrine of analogy because of the distinction he draws between sacred theology based on supernatural revelation and first philosophy. God is the subject of the former, but not of the latter. Like

³⁸ Dumont, "Scotus's Doctrine of Univocity," 206, Gómez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en las metafísica de Enrique de Gante*, 8, Paulus, *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, 57.

Thomas, Henry follows Avicenna is rejecting the identification of the subject of metaphysics with God.

Henry produces eleven arguments that God could not be the subject of theology. The third argument directly references Avicenna's circularity objection.

Just as in this science God is inquired about in a supernatural manner, from a science of divinely inspired faith, so in first philosophy a science of God is inquired about in a natural manner, an intellectual science investigated rationally. Because, as Avicenna says in book I of his *Metaphysics*, "First philosophy is a science of the first cause," and therefore it is defined to be a divine science but as it is proved in the same, "God cannot be the subject in that science," hence it is seen that neither [is He the subject] in this one for a similar reason.³⁹

If the goal of theology is cognition of God, then for precisely this reason God cannot be its subject, because he would already be known as something presupposed by theology.

Against this objection, Henry also adduces a *sed contra* argument based on Aristotle in *Metaphysics* VI.1 and a parallel passage in *De Anima* III and book II of Boethius's *De Trinitate*. All three texts distinguish the sciences from one another by their subject matter. According to Aristotle and Boethius there must be a theoretical science of theology (distinguished from mathematics and physics) that considers things

³⁹ Henry of Ghent, *Summa Quaestionum Ordinariarum*, ed. Jodocus Badius Ascensius (Paris: 1520), 114vA. "Sicut in ista scientia inquiritur Dei modo supernaturali, ex scientia fidei divinitus inspirata, sic in prima philosophia inquiritur scientia Dei modo naturali, scientia intellectus rationaliter investigata. Quia ut dicit Avicenna I. Metaphy. suae, 'Prima philosophia est scientia de prima causa,' et ideo definitur esse scientia divina sed ut probatur in eodem, 'Deus non potest esse subiectum in illa scientia,' quare videtur quod consimili ratione nec in ista." All English translations of a. 19, q. 1 are—unfortunately—my own.

that are separate and immobile and God is the subject of this science.⁴⁰ Therefore, says Henry's *sed contra* argument, "God is the subject of Theology just as abstract forms [are the subject] of mathematics and mobile corporeal forms are the subject of Physics."⁴¹

Henry begins to elaborate his own view in the response by referencing the principle from *Metaphysics* IV.1:

One science is not so much consideration of things that are of one nature in genera or in species, but also of things that are all of diverse natures amongst themselves, yet provided that all are attributed to some one principally considered in the science, as medicine is one science of all the attributes of the health of the body.⁴²

So far, Henry's response is absolutely standard. He is following Aristotle closely, allowing there to be one science of things from diverse genera if these things are predicated of one thing in a prior and posterior sense, just like medicine. Likewise, Henry appears to be entirely in line with Aristotle in attributing the priority in the diverse senses of the word "being" to substance:

⁴⁰ Cf. Boethius, "De Trinitate," in *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 8. Henry's inclusion of Boethius is interesting. Perhaps Henry means the inclusion of a Christian author to signify to his audience that he is aware that what Aristotle calls theology is not what Henry means, but that Aristotle's threefold division is still applicable to the specifically Christian sense of theology.

⁴¹ Henry of Ghent, *Summa Quaestionum Ordinariarum*, 114vA. "Deus est theologica subiectum sicut formae abstractae secundum sunt mathematica et corpora mobilia subiectum sunt naturaliter."

⁴² *Ibid.*, 114vB. "Ad hoc dicendum secundum quod vult Philosophus iii. Metaphysicum. Unius scientiae non est tantum consideratio de rebus quod sunt unius naturae in genere vel in specie, sed etiam de rebus quod sunt omino diversae naturae inter se, dummodo tamen omnes

First philosophy is principally a science of substance, which all other beings have by attribution *per se* with reference to substance, because they are either relations of substance, or qualities, or its passions, and so forth.⁴³

On Henry's view, there is a priority and posteriority involved in the subject matter of metaphysics. However, Henry also takes his account a step further than Aristotle does in *Metaphysics* IV, endorsing Avicenna's crucial claim that "being" does not have principles.

Metaphysics intends to consider principally the quiddities of being as it is being, not the quiddity of substance alone insofar as it is substance, and therefore it considers the quiddity *per se* of whichever being insofar as it is being, whether a substance or an accident. Because of this, substance could not be put down there as the subject, but *ens simpliciter*, nor something different, as Avicenna proves in *Metaphysics* I.⁴⁴

In a. 21, q. 2 the term *ens simpliciter* referred to God himself, in the sense that he was being *per essentiam*. However this sense is impossible in a. 19, q. 1 because Henry explicitly rejects the identification of God with the subject of metaphysics in the response to the third objection in a. 19, q. 1, "And therefore Avicenna speaks well that

attribuuntur alicui uni principaliter consideratio in scientia, quam medicina est scientia una de omnibus attributis sanitati corporis."

⁴³ Ibid., 114vB-15rC. "Prima philosophia principaliter est scientia substantiae, quam omnia alia entia per attributionem per se habent ad substantiam, quia aut sunt relationes substantiae, aut qualitates, aut passiones eius, etc. huiusmodi."

⁴⁴ Ibid., 115rC. ". . . qua Metaphysicum principaliter intendit considerare quidditates entis ut ens est, non quidditatem substantiae solum ut substantia est, et ideo per se considerat quidditatem cuiuslibet entis in quantum ens est, sive sit substantia sive accidentes. Propter quid ibi substantia non ponunt dici subiectum, sed ens simpliciter, nec aliquid aliud ut probat Avicenna I. Metaphys."

God is not the subject of that science [metaphysics],” because of the circularity objection.⁴⁵

But if God is not *ens simpliciter* in a. 19, q. 1, what is? To come to a satisfactory interpretation, let us note the following features of *ens simpliciter*:

(1) *Ens simpliciter* is the subject of metaphysics.

(2) Elsewhere in the question, Henry speaks of *ente simpliciter* as something which, “contains beneath it all being whether it be a principle or something produced by a principle.”⁴⁶

(3) Henry affirms that *ens simpliciter* lacks principles on Avicennian grounds,

Therefore first philosophy, which has *ente simpliciter* as its subject, does not consider some principles of its subject, because it does not have any. ‘Therefore, *ens simpliciter*, as Avicenna says in I. *Metaphysica*, ‘does not have principles.’⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., 115vK. “. . . Idcirco igitur deus potest hic esse subiectum, non tamen in aliqua scientia philosophica. Et ideo bene dicit Avicenna quod Deus non est subiectum illius scientiae, immo ex iis et de numero eorum quae quaeruntur in ea, quia an deus sit non potest concedi in illa scientia, qua non est manifestum per se, ut infra videbit. Speculatio autem de principiis non est nisi inquisitio de sequentibus subiectum illius scientiae.”

⁴⁶ Ibid., 115vL. “Unde solum scientiarum particularum quae considerant aliquod ens particulare creatum, est considerare principia subiecti . . . non autem scientiae universalis, sive quae considerat de ente simpliciter, quod continet sub se omne ens, sive sit principium sive principiatum, ut metaphysica.”

⁴⁷ Ibid. “Unde prima philosophia quae est de ente simpliciter ut de subiecto, non considerat principia aliqua subiecti, quia non habet ulla. ‘Ens enim simpliciter,’ ut dicit Avicenna primo *Metaphysicae* suae, ‘non habet principium,’ sed est principium aliquibus entibus quapropter illa scientia non inquirat principia entis absolute, sed alicuius entium, sicut faciunt aliae scientiae particulares.”

Dumont understands *ens simpliciter* to be the confused concept that would result from trying to think of something a notion prior to the determination of God and creatures.⁴⁸ However, it seems to me that Henry's choice of the term *ens simpliciter* may be influenced by the wording of William of Moerbeke's translation of *Metaphysics* IV.1 which implies an equality between *ente simpliciter* and *ens inquantum ens*.⁴⁹ In other words, the subject matter of metaphysics is just being in a universal sense.

Dumont quotes a. 21, q. 3 and a. 24, q. 3 of the *Summa* to strengthen his point. However, his use of these texts depends upon the success of the confusion interpretation of Henry's theory of analogy, which we have already discredited. When Henry says in a. 21, q. 3 that being in the sense that it is the subject of metaphysics is analogously common to creatures and their creator,⁵⁰ Dumont understands this to be the creation of one epistemologically confused notion that is then applied to God and creatures both. However, as we have seen, Henry rejects any such confused notion. Nor does Henry allow for the possibility of any single real concept common to God and creatures. The best answer perhaps is that "being" in this sense is something like a logical genus. Metaphysics treats everything you call a being, but this 'being' is not a genus precisely because there is a priority and posteriority involved in how it is

⁴⁸ Dumont, "Scotus's Doctrine of Univocity," 207.

⁴⁹ William of Moerbeke, "Metaphysica, lib. I-XIV. Recensio et Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka," in *Aristoteles Latinus*, ed. G. Vuillemin-Diem (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), IV, 1 (1025b9-10). "Sed omnes iste circa unum quid et genus aliquod circumscripte de hoc tractant, sed non de ente simpliciter nec in quantum est ens. . . "

⁵⁰ Henry of Ghent, *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 66-67 (126rD). " . . . ens largo modo acceptum, quod secundum Avicennam est subiectum metaphysicae. Et est commune analogum ad creatorem et creaturam."

predicated and the diversity of beings is reduced to a unity in one of them, as has been said above. A similar reason also explains the text from a. 24, q. 3.⁵¹

However, Dumont is right to say that there is a difference between Henry and Thomas Aquinas regarding the subject matter of metaphysics. Recall that Thomas solves the problem by relegating the subject matter of metaphysics strictly to created being divided under the ten categories, whereas Henry makes it something universal. But this move by Henry does not represent a step in the direction of nominalism, per Paulus, rather it simply shows that Henry thinks the subject matter of metaphysics is being qua being. On this point Henry remains closer to Aristotle than Thomas does.

⁵¹ Ibid., 194-95 (38vP). “. . . non determinando circa ipsam [sc. rem], an sit hoc vel illud, creator vel creatura, substantia aut accidens, et hoc est comprehendere esse de re sub illa ratione qua ens est subiectum metaphysicae.”

Conclusion

In the introduction I suggested four crucial points of interpretation for Henry's doctrine of analogy.

- (1) Is Henry's doctrine of analogy grounded ontologically or noetically?
- (2) Does Henry's doctrine of analogy rely upon one confused concept of divine and creaturely beings?
- (3) Does Henry accept or reject an Avicennian idea of a concept prior to the determination of God and creatures?
- (4) What is the relation of Henry's doctrine of analogy to Thomas's?

Having explained Aristotle, Avicenna, Thomas, and Henry's positions, I will now hazard answers to these questions.

Based on my exposition in chapter three, I concur with Decorte against Paulus that Henry's doctrine of analogy is ontological rather than psychological. As Decorte notes, and as my exposition has shown, Henry rejects the idea of a confused concept common to God and creatures. This vitiates the interpretations of Gómez Caffarena, Brown, and Dumont.

Like Decorte, I understand Henry of Ghent's doctrine of analogy to be broadly compatible with St. Thomas's for the following two reasons. (i) For both Thomas and Henry, the analogical relationship between God and a creature is not a likeness in terms of one *ratio* or intention.¹ (ii) The importance of participation as a way of explaining how creatures receive their forms from God without receiving God's own

¹ Cf. §2.2.2 on I *Sent.* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 and §3.2.1.

form. Henry calls this a *convenientia imitationis* and Thomas calls it an analogy *secundum esse et secundum intentionem*.

Despite the strong convergence between Henry and Thomas's position on the doctrine of analogy there is a difference in their understandings of the subject matter of metaphysics, as Dumont has pointed out. Thomas reduces the subject of metaphysics to created being, whereas Henry makes it the universal being *qua* being. This does not mean Henry endorses something like Avicenna's *ens commune*—Henry is quite clear there is no intention of being common to God and creatures. Rather, it simply represents Henry's faithfulness to Aristotle's own characterization of metaphysics as a science of being *qua* being in *Metaphysics* IV.

Bibliography

- Ashworth, E. J. "Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: Aquinas in Context." *Mediaeval Studies* 54 (1992): 94-135.
- — —. "Signification and Modes of Signifying in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A Preface to Aquinas on Analogy." *Medieval Philosophy & Theology* 1 (1991): 39-67.
- Aubenque, Pierre. "Sur la naissance de la doctrine pseudo-aristotélicienne de l'analogie de l'être." *Les Études Philosophiques* 13 (1989): 291-304.
- Augustine. *On The Trinity: Books 8-15*. Translated by Stephen McKenna. Edited by Gareth Matthews, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Avicenna. *Liber de Philosophia Prima: I-IV*. Edited by S. Van Riet, *Avicenna Latinus*. Louvain: Peeters, 1977.
- Boethius. "De Trinitate." In *Loeb Classical Library*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Brown, Stephen. "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being: The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli." *Franciscan Studies* 25 (1965).
- Decorte, Jos. "Henry of Ghent on Analogy: Critical Reflections on Jean Paulus' Interpretation." In *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death*, edited by W. Vanhamel, 71-105. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996.
- Dumont, Stephen. "Scotus's Doctrine of Univocity and the Medieval Tradition of Metaphysics." In *Was Ist Philosophie im Mittelalters?*, edited by Jan Aertsen and Andreas Speer, 193-212. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998.
- Gilson, Étienne. "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot." *Archive d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age*, no. 2 (1927): 89-149.
- Gómez Caffarena, José. *Ser participado y ser subsistente en las metafísica de Enrique de Gante*. Vol. 93, *Analecta Gregoriana*. Rome: Pontifica Università Gregoriana, 1958.
- Granger, Herbert. "Aristotle on Genus and Differentia." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 1 (1984): 1-21.
- Henry of Ghent. *Henry of Ghent's Summa: the Questions on God's Existence and Essence, (articles 21-24)*. Translated by J. Decorte and Roland J. Teske, *Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations*. Leuven: Peeters, 2005.

- — —. *Summa Quaestionum Ordinariarum*. Edited by Jodocus Badius Ascensius. Paris, 1520.
- Libera, Alain de. "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être." *Les Études Philosophiques* 13 (1989): 319-45.
- Montagnes, Bernard. *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin, Philosophes médiévaux*. Louvain-Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1963.
- Norman Kretzmann, and Eleonore Stump, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Owen, Guilym Ellis Lane. "Logic and Metaphysics in some Earlier Works of Aristotle." In *Logic, Science and Dialectic*, edited by Martha Nussbaum, 180-99. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Owens, Joseph. *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1951.
- Paulus, Jean. *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique, Etudes de philosophie médiévale*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1938.
- Sedley, David. "Parmenides and Melissus." In *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, edited by A. A. Long, 113-33: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Tarán, Leonardo. *Parmenides: A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965.
- Thomas Aquinas. "In Metaphysicam." In *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, 1866.
- — —. *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*.
- — —. *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province: Benziger Bros., 1947.
- William of Moerbeke. "Metaphysica, lib. I-XIV. Recensio et Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka." In *Aristoteles Latinus*, edited by G. Vuillemin-Diem. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my promoter, Prof. dr. Russell Friedman for his invaluable expertise guiding this project to its completion and also Cal Ledsham and Matt Kostelecky for their stimulating conversation on analogy and univocity in Thomas and Scotus and occasional help with recalcitrant bits of Latin.