

HEIDEGGER, LONERGAN, AND THE NOTION OF BEING

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THERE IS, IN the work of the early¹ Heidegger, *something* like Lonergan's "notion of being." In Lonergan, the notion of being is our *a priori*, *heuristic*, and trans-categorical *intention* of all, manifest in (and as) inquiry, and serving to make possible knowledge of *essence and existence*. In Heidegger, by contrast, it is our *a priori*, *possessive*, and trans-categorical *intuition* of all, now gone dim, but still present in inquiry, and serving to make possible knowledge of *essence and its modes*. Scholars may suggest that there can be no such, in Heidegger, because he was interested not in notions or being but in what is more basic than both, namely ecstatic temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) and Time (*Temporalitat*). But I show that the notion, as described, is present in *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, and is retained in *Being and Time*, where Heidegger has temporalized understanding and being. And having done so, I offer a defense of Lonergan. Not only does experience tell us that our *a priori* notion of being is no-more-than-heuristic. It also tells us that we must distinguish within it between orientations to intelligibility (essence) and affirmability (existence).²

¹ Current practice is to distinguish an 'earliest' from an 'early' and a 'late' Heidegger. For this, see John van Buren, "The Earliest Heidegger: A New Field of Research," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), pp. 19-31.

² Throughout I prescind from the question whether there is, in Heidegger, anything like Lonergan's notion of value, or transcendental intention of good. For which, see Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 10-12, 23-4, 34-6, 101-03, 115-116, 282; and Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), pp. 81-83, 127-128, 147, 273-274, 277.

 I. THE NOTION OF BEING IN LONERGAN

A. *An A Priori Notion*

“Deep within us all,” Lonergan writes, “emergent when the noise of other appetites is stilled, there is a drive to know, to understand, to see why, to discover the reason, to find the cause, to explain.” “Just what is wanted,” he notes, has many names.” “In what precisely it consists,” he admits, “is a matter of dispute.” “But the fact of inquiry,” he affirms, “is beyond all doubt.” And this he entitles our notion of being.³

It may seem odd to speak of a drive as a notion. For there are both the drive of the foetal eye, unconscious and biological, and the drive of hunger, conscious and sensitive; and neither of these is in any way cognitional.⁴ Yet “[t]he notion of being,” again, “is our ability and drive to ask questions for intelligence (What? Why? How? What for? How often?) and for reflection (Is that so? Are you certain?),”⁵ and so it is conscious, intelligent, and rational. It thus makes full sense to speak of it as notional.

Again it may seem odd to think of the drive’s term as being. For several philosophers have considered being to come in already with objects of thought; and the notion of being pushes beyond thought to reality.⁶ However, ‘being’ is simply the name Lonergan gives to whatever it is that we seek when we inquire; he is ever willing to revise its sense to accord with what we learn of our approach to it.⁷ Indeed this is a methodological principle for him.⁸ So we may think of being’s meaning as functionally defined, and leave its precise designation open.

Now this notion of being is *a priori* in an advised sense. It is not absolutely independent of experience, as are Kant’s forms of intuition and categories of the understanding.⁹ To the contrary, it requires experience as the occasion of its operation. But if it is made to function only in response to data, it is in no way ever acquired therefrom. And this must be so. For consider the alternative, that inquiry comes from experience. If that were true, it would be necessary to

³ Bernard Lonergan, CWL 3 28.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 378-79.

⁵ Bernard Lonergan, “*Insight Revisited*,” in *A Second Collection*, p. 274.

⁶ Op. cit., p. 378.

⁷ Ibid., p. 374.

⁸ For affinities with Cajetan here, see Ibid., p. 392-93.

⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, A1-2/B1-6. pp. 41-45.

inquire into experience in order to become inquisitive; and that is absurd. Lonergan writes:

The fundamental moment in the notion of being lies in the capacity to wonder and reflect, and that as potency we have from nature. If a person naturally does not have the capacity to wonder, to be surprised by what he sees or hears or feels, to ask why, to ask what's happening, what's up, then there is no remedy; there is nothing we can do. ... However ... we cannot wonder or inquire without having something about which to wonder or inquire; and it is the flow of sensations, perceptions and images that provides the materials about which [we do so]. ... The potency is from nature; the exercise involves experience.¹⁰

B. A Heuristic Notion

Because the notion of being is wonder or inquiry, it does not yet possess its term. But this does not mean it is in no way attuned to it. And in fact, in reaching or yearning for it, the notion of being prefigures its goal.

[The notion of being] is neither ignorance nor knowledge but the dynamic intermediary between [the two]. It is the conscious movement away from ignorance and towards knowledge. When we question, we do not know the answer yet, but already we want [it]. Not only do we want the answer but also we are aiming at what is to be known through [it].¹¹

And it is in virtue of this aim that our notion is heuristic.

Heuristic notions are familiar to us from math and science. In seeking after the definition of a circle, we do not merely gape, but search in the light of our assumptions that similars are similarly understood and the relevant similarities are those of things in relation to one another. That is, we proceed very differently than we would if we were engaged in commonsensical inquiry. Moreover, we make clear to ourselves all that we know of the other elements involved, so that in the light of those assumptions and these bits of knowledge, we may proceed more intelligently toward our goal. In all of this, we proceed in an anticipatory

¹⁰ Bernard Lonergan, CWL 5 164.

¹¹ Bernard Lonergan, "Natural Knowledge of God," in *A Second Collection*, p. 123.

fashion, tipping ourselves off to the nature of the unknown by the light of what we know already, and by the light of what we do not know but intend.¹²

The notion of being operates in a similar way. But of course it does so at a more basic level. It is that by which we intend all we do not know, that by which we reach for the Truth, so that our assumptions and guiding anticipations may be guided by it. It is no particular notion, but the notion of being, simpliciter, for which reason Lonergan calls it our “supreme heuristic notion.”

Prior to every content, it is the notion of the to-be-known through that content. As each content emerges, the ‘to-be-known through the content’ passes without residue into the ‘known through that content’. ... Hence, prior to all answers, the notion of being is the notion of the totality to be known through all answers. But once all answers are reached, the notion of being becomes the notion of the totality known through all answers.¹³

C. A Transcategorical Notion (Of Essence and Existence)

We do not know totality in this life. Still, the notion of being directs us toward it, it orients us to it; and insofar as it does so, it comports us to all.

Intending then is comprehensive. Though human achievement is limited, still [its] root dynamism is unrestricted. We would know everything about everything, the whole universe in all its multiplicity and concreteness, *omnia, to pan*, and, in that concrete and comprehensive sense, being.¹⁴

Moreover, this must be so. For consider the suggestion that inquiry is limited. If it were, there would be a sphere about which we can’t inquire; yet, in speaking of some such, we clearly identify a candidate for inquiry. The attempt to delimit inquiry would seem to be self-defeating.

Every doubt that the pure desire is unrestricted serves only to prove that it is unrestricted. If you ask whether X might not lie beyond its range, the fact that you ask proves that X lies within its range.¹⁵

¹² Lonergan, CWL 3 60-62. And see CWL 5 60-65.

¹³ Lonergan, CWL 3 380-81.

¹⁴ Lonergan, “Natural Knowledge of God,” p. 124.

¹⁵ Lonergan, CWL 3 352. The reader will note here affinities with Hegel’s critique of Kant’s *Ding an Sich*, Wittgenstein’s critique of the notion of a limit, and perhaps also Donald Davidson’s critique of total incommensurability, for which, in turn, see section 44 of *The Logic of Hegel*, tr.

Speaking in scholastic terms, Lonergan describes our notion as transcendental (by which, he says, he means trans-categorical¹⁶). The reason is this. “The cognitive name for the object that includes absolutely everything, every aspect of everything, is being.”¹⁷ But “[b]eing does not lie within any restricted genus. While it can be divided up into beings of different kinds, being itself is not some limited kind.” And we know this because of the acts by which we intend it. It is true that, in the first place, we ask what-questions, and so intend or muster a notion of essence; but then we move to ask whether-questions, and so intend or muster a notion of existence – and this latter transcends sortal predicates. The notion of being, then, is transcendental or transcategorical insofar as it intends what *is* without categorial specificity.¹⁸

But note: to say this is not to say there is no intention of essence in Lonergan. To the contrary, the reach for intelligibility is fundamental in his view.¹⁹ It is simply that this reach is sublated, or gone beyond in a way that includes it, in the further perfecting of inquiry.

What promotes the subject from experiential to intellectual consciousness is the desire to understand, the intention of intelligibility. What next promotes him, from intellectual to rational consciousness, is a fuller unfolding of the same intention: for the desire to understand, once understanding is reached, becomes the desire to understand correctly; in other words, the intention of intelligibility, once an intelligible is reached, becomes the intention of the right intelligible, of the true and, through truth, of reality.²⁰

So there is a sense, indeed, in which we may say the notion of being, in Lonergan, is the transcategorical notion of essence and existence.

William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1873), pp. 91-92, and “Remark: The Thing-in-itself of Transcendental Idealism,” appended to chapter 1, A (b) of Section 2 of book 2, of *Science of Logic*, tr. A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969), pp. 489-90; nos. 5.6-5.641 of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1981), pp. 149-53; and “On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme,” in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 47 (1973-4), pp. 5-20. But, of course, the devil is in the details; and Lonergan would register many points of disagreement.

¹⁶ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 13-14, n. 4.

¹⁷ Lonergan, CWL 5 148.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* And see CWL 3 356.

¹⁹ See, for example, CWL 5 29-30, 64-5, and *Method in Theology*, p. 10.

²⁰ Lonergan, “The Subject,” in *A Second Collection*, p. 81.

D. A Notion Manifest as Question

From all we have been saying, it ought to be clear, too, that the notion of being is manifest as question. "When an animal has nothing to do, it goes to sleep." But when a human being is unoccupied, she may ask questions; and in so doing, she activates her intellectual eros.²¹

Where does the 'Why?' come from? What does it reveal or represent? Already we had occasion to speak of the psychological tension that had its release in the joy of discovery. It is that tension, that drive, that desire to understand, that constitutes the primordial 'Why?' Name it what you please, alertness of mind, intellectual curiosity, the spirit of inquiry ... [The] primordial drive ... is the pure question.²²

This pure question is no particular question or even set of questions but their font or source.

It is not the verbal utterance of questions ... not the conceptual formulation of questions ... not any insight or thought ... not any reflective grasp or judgment. It is the prior and enveloping drive that carries cognitional process from sense and imagination to understanding, from understanding to judgment, from judgment to the complete context of judgments that is named knowledge.²³

And, as the foregoing suggests, it is a drive that precipitates into two strands. In the first place, there is the intellectual, and in the second place, there is the critical, strand.

We move from the level of sense presentations, perception, and images to a level of insight and conception, inasmuch as we are intellectually alert, inasmuch as we have not only verbal questions or questions conceptually expressed, but also that root of questioning that is intellectual curiosity, wanting to understand something. We move from the level of conception to critical reflective consciousness inasmuch as we are the root that is manifested in such questions as, Is it so? All efforts to understand and all under-

²¹ Lonergan, *CWL* 3 10.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

standing, all efforts to conceive and all conceiving, depend upon the wonder expressed in the questions, What?, Why? and How often? All efforts to grasp the virtually unconditioned and actually grasping [it], all efforts to judge and actual judging, depend upon the desire expressed in such questions as, Is it really so?²⁴

E. A Notion Manifest as Criterion

Finally, it is in the light of such strands of Inquiry that our inquiries are normed. In fact, the notion of being, when understood in this way, is our *lumen naturale*.

[It is] the inner light, the light that raises questions and, when answers are insufficient, keeps raising further questions. It is the inner light of intelligence that asks what and why and how and what for and, until insight hits the bull's eye, keeps further questions popping up. It is the inner light of reasonableness that demands sufficient reason before assenting and, until sufficient reason is forthcoming, keeps in your mind the further questions of the doubter.²⁵

The notion of being, then, does not only put questions, but in so doing supplies a light by which we may answer. It is the light of intelligence and reason, in which the essence and existence of things are seen.

Let us consider, as an illustration, our example of the circle, from before. If, in response to the question, What is it?, What is its nature?, or Why is it round?, I grasp a relation between equal radii-length and roundness, and so hit upon the essential, here, I do so in part because I have been guided to do so by my notion of essence, proper. And if, in response to the further question, Is it?, Am I right?, I grasp the sufficiency of conditions for an affirmation, I do so in part because of my anticipation of existence. There is, in us, a dialectical relationship between questions put and answers given, that constitutes our intelligent and rational life. But it is only because of the questions that we have, and are, that we are ever in a position to answer.

²⁴ Lonergan, CWL 5 150. And see "Cognitional Structure," in CWL 4 211.

²⁵ Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Praxis," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S. J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 193.

[T]he intention of being ... demands, it initiates, the process of knowing, guides [it], and sets the criteria by which one carries [it] out It ... guides it by a requirement of intelligibility through which one effects the transition from essence to being, from *essentia* to *ens*. Once that transition is effected, you get your question, Is it? *An sit?* That question is not only asking for an answer; it is also setting up a criterion If you grasp the virtually unconditioned, you can answer, 'Yes,' and if you grasp it, you cannot be rational and not answer, 'Yes.'²⁶

II. THE NOTION OF BEING IN *HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF TIME* (1925)

A. *An A Priori Notion*

For Heidegger, too, we possess an *a priori* notion of being. This is made clear in the penultimate draft of his opus, *Being and Time*, called *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*.²⁷ There, he asks "What does being mean?", and replies:

The question seeks an answer which determines something which is somehow already given in the very questioning. ... When we ... ask about the sense of being, ... being, which is to be determined, is in a certain way already understood.²⁸

Being is "somehow already given," it is "in a certain way already understood," when we seek it. It is thus a condition of ontological inquiry, at least. And this is perhaps uncontroversial; for even Meno can admit that we cannot seek a thing if we have no idea of it. But how do we come by the idea? Do we begin from mere perception of beings, and abstract to produce the most universal concept? This is clearly not what Heidegger intends. For he adds that "We constantly make use of this indefinite meaning ... 'being'." We do so, perhaps particularly, when we ask, "What 'is' being?" But beyond this, "We *always already live in an understanding of the 'is' ...*" And this "indicates," he says, that "the understanding of 'being' ... is always already there."²⁹

²⁶ Lonergan, CWL 5 169.

²⁷ The draft is entitled the *Onto-eroteric draft* by Theodore Kisiel, who describes (and names) each draft in his *The Genesis of Heidegger's BEING AND TIME* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 309-451.

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, tr. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 143.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

In a section of the *Prolegomena*, Heidegger even describes the *a priori* as “a title for being.”³⁰ By this, he means it is neither an imposition of the subject, nor an abstraction from particulars, which of course it cannot be, unless it is to be *a posteriori*. It is, instead, something like the field, or *Sein-Dasein* relation, on whose horizon distinctions between subject and object occur. It is our being, in thrall to being, simpliciter; and insofar as it is so, it is basic, or prior to all else. Heidegger writes that “the discovery of the *a priori* is ... identical with the discovery of being in Parmenides or in Plato,”³¹ for whom being and thinking are the same. And if he will adjust their understanding, by highlighting the ‘temporal’ character of the *prius*, his ‘destroying’ will be more retrieval than razing.³²

B. A Possessive Notion

However, if, for Heidegger, as for Lonergan, our notion of being is *a priori*, it is not heuristic, or strictly anticipative. To the contrary, it is in possession of its term. It is ‘indeterminate’, we are told. And it is merely implicit, for if we understand being, “[w]e (‘Anyone’) do not know what being means;”³³ and ‘knowing’ is ever a matter of explication, in Heidegger.³⁴ But “[e]ven this unoriented and vague pre-understanding,” he says, “is still an understanding.”³⁵

The key here is Heidegger’s mereology. Cognition, for him, is ever the bringing-out of a part from a whole; i.e., it is ever the explication of what was previously implicit. This can be seen in his doctrines of understanding (*Verstehen*) and interpretation (*Auslegung*), as well as in the Husserlian doctrines on which these are based. In Husserl we begin from “sensuous intuition,” in which we encounter the totality of what is, though in an undifferentiated mix of particular and universal; here the categorial is entirely implicit.³⁶ We next proceed to “synthetic categorial intuition,” in which we explicate the surplus of meaning contained in sense. Finally, if we desire, we move to “ideational categorial intuition,” in which we express the categorial in separation from the concrete.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 74.

³¹ Ibid., p. 75.

³² Ibid., p. 140. Heidegger speaks of ‘refinement’ and ‘modification’.

³³ Ibid., p. 143.

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 57-71; 160-67; 252-72; 293-304; and Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1962), pp. 86-90; 188-210; 262-68; 384-417.

³⁵ Op. cit., p. 144.

³⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Volume II, Second Section: Sense and Understanding, Chapter Six: Sensuous and Categorial Intuitions, tr. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 773-802. And for Heidegger’s gloss, see *History of the Concept of Time*, esp. p. 70.

The process is a progressive unpacking of what was contained in the beginning.³⁷

Heidegger praises Husserl's cognitional theory, but does not take it over, simply. Instead, he situates cognition, so portrayed, in socio-practical and temporal context. For him, Husserl's sensuous intuition never occurs, save for in the context of 'Being-in-the-World', or ensconcement in sets of end-directed involvements.³⁸ It never occurs, except in the light of 'disposed' 'understanding', or situated projection of ways to be.³⁹ It never occurs, except on the horizon opened by 'care', or 'being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-involved-in'.⁴⁰ It never occurs, except on the field of 'time', or past-influenced anticipation of the future.⁴¹ In every case, the relevant 'founding' context, light, horizon, or field is basic, containing all that is explicated from it. And this basic understanding, in turn, is derived from our grasp of being, itself.⁴²

C. A Transcategorical Notion (of Essence and Its Modes)

Again, for Heidegger, as for Lonergan, our notion of being is transcategorical, or directed to all. If, *a priori*, or in advance of any induction, we operate "within an understanding of the 'is,'" this being which we understand is an undifferentiated whole. "What-is," Heidegger tells us, "is in a certain sense everything of which we speak, which we intend, toward which we act, and, even if only as to something inaccessible, everything to which we are related."⁴³ It is at once our broadest, and our most concrete, notion.⁴⁴ It is *omnia*, or totality, to be sure.

And yet, what is most interesting about it, for our purposes here, is the fact that it is something like essence and its modes. It is not, I think, essence and existence, as it is in Lonergan, but instead something like these collapsed, or existence as, to some degree, taken into essence. Heidegger says that being is "all of that which we ourselves are and how we are," and in this he seems to invoke Husserl's distinction between *Dass- und So-sein*.⁴⁵

³⁷ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, pp. 47-72. For my understanding of Heidegger's mereology, I am indebted to Einar Overenget, *Seeing the Self: Heidegger on Subjectivity* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), pp. 7-33 and throughout.

³⁸ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, pp. 151-250.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 250-72.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-304.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-320.

⁴² *Ibid.* pp. 143-44.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*

Consider again Husserl's doctrine of cognition. "In ... simple perception ... the entity itself is first there simply [in 'onfold', as it were] without complication." That is, its "real parts and moments ... do not stand out in relief." But these may be brought out, and "[t]his bringing into relief takes place in new and special acts of explication."

Consider, for example, the simple accentuation of the *q*, of the 'yellow' in the perceived chair, in the *S*, that is, in the whole of the subject matter perceived as a unity. Simply drawing out the color as a specific property in the chair first makes the *q*, the 'yellow', present as a moment, [that is, in a form] which was not present before in the simple perception of the thing.⁴⁶

I perceive a yellow chair, and in so doing see both yellow and a chair. But I do not for all of the world see the chair's *being* yellow; for this an act of categorial intuition is required. In such an act, I grasp the chair as-*yellow*, and I grasp it as *being-yellow*, at once: I intuit essence and existence "in a flash."⁴⁷ And I lay out my content "in a specific how of givenness."⁴⁸ Here, I "make present," or present as static truth.

This doctrine is not unimportant to Heidegger. It is true that he modifies it, but he also remains indebted to it. In his own account, simple perception is ever book-ended by thrown-projection; it is ever contextualized by situated anticipation; it is ever founded by ecstatic temporalisation. And yet as such it is still founded *intuition*; and the explications of being (essence and existence collapsed) and modalities that it makes possible are more of the same. To wit: Heidegger's 'interpretation' is a laying-out (*aus-legen*), and his 'assertion' is a saying-out (*aus-sagen*), of what is already grasped in understanding (*Verstehen*). And his primary conception of truth as *aletheia* founds truth as correspondence. In every case, the motif 'intuition-explication' remains in force, even if the *intuitus* has been rendered more deeply. And this means that the being which it accesses remains 'seen'.

D. A Notion Manifest as Question

Now if, for Heidegger, as not for Lonergan, our notion of being is possessive, we may wonder why it is manifest as question, as it is. Why, if we already

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 44, 55.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 62.

possess our term, would we ever need to inquire after it? There are three reasons. First, our *a priori* notion of being is implicit and undifferentiated; if we understand it, we do not yet know it, explicitly. Second, false philosophic theories have covered over our sense of being, leaving us vague about what is in fact ours. Third, we are in our very nature prone to cooperate with such coverup, falling again and again into reducing being to beings: forgetfulness rules.⁴⁹

However, we remain in touch with our ground. As we have seen, it is through our awareness of our own being, in various acts, that we are aware of being in general.⁵⁰ And so, despite having gone 'mute' about it, we are still in a position to inquire.⁵¹ In fact, our very being, now, is fundamentally in the interrogative mode. And this supplies the basis for Heidegger's methodological approach.

"Now *which* entity ... is it," he asks, "... in which the potential sense of being can be obtained and read off?"⁵² The answer, of course, is our being, or the being that we are, *Da-sein*, or the being who, in her very being, cares about being. "The question of being," he says,

and its articulation will become all the more lucid, the more truly we have made this entity manifest, namely, the being of the questioning of the questioner himself. In order to answer the question of the being of entities, ... what is demanded is the *prior elaboration of an entity on its being*, that entity which we call questioning."⁵³

Questioning may not be the only act through which we understand our being, and hence being itself, but it is perhaps the primary of them; and this especially in our era of *Verfall*. Therefore, 'proximately and for the most part', we might say, the notion of being is manifest as question.

E. A Notion Serving as Criterion

Finally, for Heidegger, as for Lonergan, the notion of being serves as criterion. In its *a priori* possession of essence and its modes, however gone dim, and however in need of unpacking, it guides our efforts to lay beings out as this or

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 128-31.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 143-44.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 129.

⁵² Ibid., p. 145.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 146.

that, and in this or that way. In fact, for Heidegger, as for Lonergan, our notion of being is akin to a *lumen naturale*.

Dasein by itself, by its nature, in what it is, has a light. It is intrinsically defined by a light. To take an example, this means that a mere thing, a stone, has no light within itself, which means that what it is and how it is toward its environs, if we can speak at all of an environment for the stone, is without sight. We cannot even say that it is dark, since darkness is in fact the negation of light. There is darkness only where there can be light. The manner of being of a mere thing stands beyond or before light and dark. By contrast, the idea that the *lumen naturale* belongs to the Dasein of man means that *it is lighted within itself*, that it is involved in something, has and sees this something and together with it is this very involvement.⁵⁴

Dasein has a light within itself, in virtue of which it may find what it seeks. Indeed, it is its own light. But in Heidegger's case, this also means Dasein is its own answer. For in him, as not in Lonergan, the light that is the notion of being is also 'sight', or possession; it is intuition. We do not say this because of the ocular metaphor alone — Lonergan also speaks of 'insight'. We say it because Heidegger says Dasein 'has' and 'sees' what it is involved with, and indeed 'is' this involvement. Such language calls to mind Husserl's doctrines of sensuous and categorial intuition, and suggests possession of being from the start, without any significant (or more-than-explicative) attendant process. It is, then, no surprise when Heidegger says, even of Dasein's querying character, that it is utterly one with its term.

We thus have a very distinctive questioning inasmuch as in the content of the question, in what is asked for, what is asked for is itself what the questioning ... is.⁵⁵

Nor is it a surprise when, on the next page, Heidegger invokes Parmenides again in order to make the point.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 297-98.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 147.

If we turn back to history, ... when the question of being appeared for the first time, in Parmenides, here we already see this peculiar bond. The union is here taken to be so close that in a sense what is asked about and is determined in its being is identified with the interrogative and experiential comportment.⁵⁶

III. THE LIKELY OBJECTIONS OF HEIDEGGERIANS –AND REPLIES

A. Heidegger Was Not Interested in Notions

In response to all we have been saying, it is likely Heideggerians would say Heidegger was never interested in notions, or any phenomena associated with “the philosophy of consciousness.” To the contrary, they might insist, his entire project was to cut below consciousness, subjectivity, and intuition, as well as the notions to which these give rise, to identify the comportments (*Verhalten*) that lie beneath. And yet, if this is so, then our comparison is bankrupt. For it casts Heidegger in terms he rejects.

Consider, for example, Theodore Kisiel’s claim that “The Heideggerian retrieve opposes Husserl in situating the understanding and exposition of meaning not in acts of consciousness but first of all in a pre-conscious realm of being-in-the-world, which is already pervaded by ‘expressivity’.”⁵⁷ Certainly, Kisiel does not mean to say that Dasein goes forward as knocked out cold. Nor, presumably, does he mean to find a doctrine of the unconscious in Heidegger. He can only mean to oppose Heidegger’s view to a Cartesian one for which consciousness is ever thematic. And yet, if consciousness *is* ever thematic, then we have erred indeed in likening Heidegger to a thinker for whom the notion of being is conscious.

Again, in the view of several scholars, there can be, for Heidegger, no talk of subjectivity. After expounding Heidegger’s notion of truth, Fr. Richardson asks, “Is this a subjectivism?” and answers, “It would be, if There-being were a subject. But this is what There-being is not.”⁵⁸ And the analytic school of commentators on Heidegger even flirts with the idea that Dasein is not human. John Haugland understands it as a “social institution” or “way of life.” Charles Guignon denies

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 148.

⁵⁷ Theodore Kisiel, “The Transformation of the Categorical,” in his *Heidegger’s Way of Thought*, eds. A. Denker and Marion Heinz (New York: Continuum Press, 2002), p. 98.

⁵⁸ William J. Richardson, S.J., “Heidegger’s Way Through Phenomenology to the Thinking of Being,” in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, Inc., 1981), p. 88.

that it may be taken as 'shorthand' for human being. And Hubert Dreyfus counts these measures as at least helpful correctives of counter-tendencies.⁵⁹ Yet, again, if such readings are right, we err in likening Heidegger to a thinker for whom the notion of being is 'had' by a subject.

Consider, lastly, Taylor Carman's claim that Heidegger is in no way indebted to intuition. In opposition, perhaps, to the resurgence of interpretation to the contrary, he asserts that "categorical intuition remains alien to the substance and method of Heidegger's phenomenology."⁶⁰ "*Being and Time*," he writes, "reconceives intentionality by removing it from the theory of consciousness and cognition in Husserl's work, in particular the 'Elucidation of Cognition' in the Sixth Investigation, and resituating it in an account of worldly practical activity."⁶¹ Once 'removed' and 'resituated', human understanding is no longer intuitive, but practical and temporal: it is "a future-directed projection into practical possibilities."⁶² And yet, again, if this is so, we are remiss in treating Heidegger as we do.

B. Heidegger Was Interested in Notions, but Sought to Highlight Their Lived, Practical Core

However, we believe that Heidegger *was* interested in notions, but simply sought to highlight their lived horizon. It is true that Cartesian interpretations of consciousness, subjectivity and intuition separate them from the situations in and through which they go forward, and so produce notions of notions as 'free-floating'. And it is true that, in some passages, Heidegger assimilates all notions of consciousness, subjectivity and intuition to Cartesian ones. But we would follow Overenget, Crowell, and Dahlstrom in holding him to his better angels, and note the ways in which he sublates, and does not jettison, the tradition.

Regarding 'consciousness', for example, we admit that, in his later years, Heidegger himself says "[a]ny attempt ... to rethink *Being and Time* is thwarted as long as one is satisfied with the observation that, in this study, the term 'being

⁵⁹ See John Haugland, "Heidegger on Being a Person," *Nous*, Vol. XVI, March 1982, pp. 15-26; Charles Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), p. 104; and Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 14. I owe the references to Overenget, pp. 106-7.

⁶⁰ Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in BEING AND TIME* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 67.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶² *Op. cit.*

there' [Dasein] is used in place of 'consciousness'."⁶³ But Heidegger says 'rethink', and not 'understand'. And by 'consciousness' he likely means "consciousness as understood by Descartes" and not consciousness, simpliciter; for he is ever inveighing against Descartes, in *Being and Time*.⁶⁴ However, even if Heidegger is, here, decrying the notion of consciousness, *per se*, he is so doing at a point in his work when he interprets human beings as near sieves for the revelation of being. Hence it is not surprising he would recast his earlier work in this way.

Regarding Heidegger's sometime scorn for 'subjectivity', we might take a similar line. It is true that, in *Being and Time*, he is unwilling to designate Dasein as a 'subject', and he so brutalizes thinkers, like Descartes and Kant, who do, that it is tempting to think he equates subjectivity with inner-sphere, cabinet-like egoism. But in neighboring works he refers to Dasein as a 'subject', if one "in an understood sense."⁶⁵ And in any case, it is clear even in *Being and Time* that what he wants to avoid is construing Dasein as "present at hand." This is most obvious in his account of self-presence, which he casts not as turning back on oneself in an act of reflexion, but as self-awareness concomitant with acts of understanding in a world.

The sight which is related primarily and on the whole to existence we call *transparency* [*Durchsichtigkeit*]. We choose this term to designate "knowledge of the Self" ["*Selbsterkenntnis*"] in a sense which is well understood, so as to indicate that here it is not a matter of perceptually tracking down and inspecting a point called the Self [*Selbspunktes*], but rather one of seizing upon the full disclosedness of Being-in-the-world *throughout all...*[its] constitutive moments.⁶⁶

⁶³ Martin Heidegger, "The Way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics," in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), pp. 270-71, quoted in Overenget, p. 101.

⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 122-34.

⁶⁵ See, for example, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, tr. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 195; and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, tr. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 174, 216, and 219. Cited in Overenget, pp. 30, notes, and 107.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 187-88. And see pp. 72-3, 150-53.

The subject Heidegger rejects is not the subject as subject, but the subject as object. And this is a rejection consistent with, and required by, an interest in subjectivity.⁶⁷

Finally, regarding 'intuition', too, we believe that Heidegger is more friend than foe. In *Being and Time*, to be sure, he says that "[u]nder the unbroken hegemony of traditional ontology, the genuine mode of registering what truly is has been decided in advance. It lies in *noein*, 'intuition' in the widest sense."⁶⁸ And, to be sure, he takes himself in this text to qualify that hegemony: "By showing how all sight is grounded primarily in understanding ... we have robbed pure intuition of its privilege."⁶⁹ But it is only 'pure' intuition which he wishes to rob of its privilege, and his intent is not to jettison it, but to 'ground' it in else: "The following division," he says – the never published third – "will show that and how the intentionality of 'consciousness' is *grounded* in the ecstatic temporality of *Dasein*."⁷⁰ His intent is to situate, and not obliterate, *noein*.

On balance, then, Heidegger can be seen to endorse consciousness, subjectivity, and intuition, although these in qualified senses. And if this is so, he may well, too, endorse the notion of 'notions' that arise from them. So, we consider our enterprise, at least in this respect, valid.

C. Heidegger Was Not Interested in Being

However, there is another respect in which commentators will reject our efforts. Not only will they say Heidegger was uninterested in the philosophy of consciousness; they will say he was uninterested in being. On the face of it, this is an unlikely claim to make of the author of *Being and Time*. But it is a claim that is frequent in the English scholarship.

In 1981 Thomas Sheehan remarked that "we might enhance the explanation of Heidegger's subject matter by retiring the terms 'Being' and 'the question of Being' from the discussion."⁷¹ More recently he writes that "Heidegger's focal topic was not 'being' (the givenness or availability of entities for human engagement) but rather what brings about being, ... -- the opening of a clearing

⁶⁷ For a defense of this claim, see my "Heidegger, Lonergan, and Self-Presence," in *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 23 (2005).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129. Cited in, and translated by, Carman, p. 66.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 187. Cited in, and translated by, Carman, p. 67.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 363, note. Cited in, and translated by, Carman, p. 67. The brackets are mine.

⁷¹ Thomas Sheehan, "Introduction," in Thomas Sheehan, ed., *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, Inc., 1981), p. vii.

in which entities can appear as this or that.”⁷² His colleague John Caputo declares that “[t]he real concern of thought [for Heidegger] is, not the Being of the metaphysicians [taken in a broad sense to include transcendental and phenomenological thinkers] but that which grants Being as the subject matter of metaphysics. It is not the distinction between Being and beings which concerns [him], but that which opens up this distinction.”⁷³ John Van Buren follows, saying “Thus [even] Heideggerians in their search for “Being” have for years been after the wrong thing... his question was never really the question of being, but rather the more radical [one] of what gives or produces being as an effect.”⁷⁴ And, he adds: “what is sought after is ... a third thing, namely, the radical depth dimension of the temporal happening ... of ... being.”⁷⁵ Finally, Theodore Kisiel concurs with all of the foregoing, when he writes:

[C]ontrary to the usual characterizations, what Heidegger is after ... is not so much a phenomenological ontology as something more basic, what he himself tentatively designated, appropriately in his first Logic course, as a ‘phenomenological chronology’ (199), a ‘chronologic’ (200). More than an ontology, since it will transcend being itself. For time ... ‘is the condition of possibility for the fact that something like being (not beings) be given, the condition of possibility that in fact gives being’ (410). Time ‘is’ the It that gives being.⁷⁶

What is going on here? These commentators constitute a tradition of Heidegger-scholarship which increasingly emphasizes the *Destruktion* over the *Wiederholung* in his work, emboldened to do so by the recent publication of his *juvenilia*. However, its interpretations seem to us to be hyperbolic. Again and again, we think, it blurs the distinction between sublation and rejection, and does disservice to Heidegger. However, we admit these matters are difficult, especially since Heidegger himself was in no wise clear about them: he did not complete Division III of his *opus*. So we will have to be tentative in replying.

⁷² Thomas Sheehan, “Kehre and Ereignis,” in Richard Polt and Gregory Fried, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger’s INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 5.

⁷³ John Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), p. 3.

⁷⁴ John Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumour of a Hidden King* (Evanston: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 38.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s BEING AND TIME* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1993), pp. 418-19.

D. Heidegger Was Interested in Being, but Sought to Highlight Its Absential Horizon

To us it seems that Heidegger *was* interested in being, but simply sought to highlight its absential horizon. Consider, again, his doctrine of understanding. In becoming aware of, for example, “white paper,” I at once grasp it as *white*, and I grasp it *as being* white. In a single stroke, or flash, I grasp whatness and thatness, essence and existence. Or, I grasp these as collapsed; I grasp what Heidegger calls ‘being’. But as over against Husserl, I do so in a way *for which I have been prepared*, by my past, which thus shapes and colors my construal, and in a way *which is led* by my future, or my anticipation of it, which thus also colors my grasp. And in this, I not only present a meaning but do so on the field of time. I set forth this or that, as (be-ing) this or that; but I do so only on the basis of what is not present, not set forth, and quite outstanding: I present on the field of an absence, or an absential horizon.

Now this absential horizon, time (*Zeitlichkeit*), is keyed to Time (*Temporalität*) as the ultimate correlate of our temporal lives.⁷⁷ And inasmuch as this is so in Heidegger, it is tempting to posit it as “more basic than” being, in the sense of “some third thing,” “lying beneath.” That is, it is tempting to hypostatize it. But Heidegger is quite clear that, if being is inseparable from Time, Time is inseparable from being.⁷⁸ So we would do well to construe it, not as what lies beneath or is beyond being, but as what makes it possible, or is its horizon.⁷⁹ And if we do so, Heidegger’s interest in Time does not replace but supplements and extends his interest in being, which in turn makes it possible for us to continue to ask after it. Let us, then, do just this now, to see that, in *Being and Time*, the notion of being remains.

IV. THE PERSISTENCE OF THE NOTION IN *BEING AND TIME* (1927)

A. An A Priori Notion

Even in *Being and Time*, when Heidegger has temporalized understanding and being, the notion of being is preserved; and, as in the *Prolegomena*, it is held to be *a priori*. “Inquiry, as a kind of seeking,” he tells us, “must be guided beforehand by what is sought. So the meaning of Being must already be available to us in some way.” And, in fact, “we always conduct our activities in an under-

⁷⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, e.g. p. 40, and 415-18.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 458, and 472.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39, and most famously, p. 488.

standing of Being.”⁸⁰ So a grasp of it is the condition, not just of ontological, but of any inquiry; which is to say it is *a priori*.

But how is this so? “Dasein,” Heidegger writes, “is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it.” Dasein cares about itself, cares about its being. “But in that case,” Heidegger continues, “this is a constitutive state of Dasein’s Being, [which] implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being – a relation which itself is one of Being.” And this, he concludes, “means ... that there is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being.” In *fine*: “It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Being, this Being is disclosed to it. *Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being.*”⁸¹

B. A Possessive Notion

Now, to say that, in being in relation to itself, Dasein understands its being, and so understands being itself, is in no way to say it *knows* either. For understanding, in Heidegger, is ever implicit; and knowing, in him, is ever explicit, as we have noted. “We do not *know* what ‘Being’ means,” he admits. “[B]ut even if we ask, ‘What is “Being”?’ , we keep within an understanding of the ‘is’, though we are unable to fix conceptually what that ‘is’ signifies.” “We do not,” he adds, “even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed. *But this vague average understanding of Being is still a Fact.*”⁸²

The position, we believe, is close to that of Coreth, who may have learned it from his teacher. “As I engage in the performance of my questioning,” he writes, “... I know, that I ask; I know that I am engaged in asking and am performing the asking; ... I know that the performance of my questioning ‘is’.”⁸³ And, from this “immediate experience of being and the certainty of performance ... I know ... about being or the meaning of being in general.”⁸⁴ Coreth uses ‘know’ where Heidegger uses ‘understanding’ to be sure. But their view is the same: we come

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 32. And note: Heidegger does not say Dasein understands merely its own being. “Dasein possesses — as constitutive for its understanding of existence — an understanding of the Being of all entities of a character other than its own” (p. 34). “Dasein is,” he says, “in such a way as to be something which understands something like Being” (p. 39).

⁸² Ibid., p. 25.

⁸³ Emeric Coreth, S.J., *Metaphysik. Eine methodisch-systematischen Grundlegung*, Innsbruck 1961, p. 136. Cited and translated by Giovanni Sala, S.J., in “Experience of Being and Horizon of Being,” tr. R. Krismer and D. Robidoux, OSB, from the original “*Seinserfahrung und Seinshorizont nach E. Coreth und B. Lonergan*,” in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 89 (1967).

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 137.

to know being, *per se*, by first knowing our own be-ing. Or, rather, in be-ing, we understand ourselves as being, and so are aware of being, itself; *a priori*, or prior to any learning, we are, and are in possession of being.

C. A Transcategorical Notion (of Essence and Its Modes)

Moreover, this being, which we possess *a priori*, is trans-categorical; it cuts across concepts. Just as my own being "is never to be taken ... as an instance or special case of some genus," but is instead properly thought as 'ex-istent', or outside of itself in thrall to all, so is being, *per se*, not to be taken as class, genus, or kind, but as what goes beyond or transcends specificity. And, just as my own being is thought, not to have 'properties', but to exist in this or that way, so is being, *per se*, thought to have various possible 'modes'.⁸⁵ Not only my own being, but the being, *per se*, I know in and through it, are comprised of essence and its modes, or essence/existence (collapsed), layed out in this or that fashion. (Or, at least, this is how things might haltingly be expressed from a Thomist standpoint.)

That being *is* transcategorical, for Heidegger, is clear. For he takes pains to note that, the being we grasp in ourselves, and grasp *per se*, is universal not in the sense of the concept, leaving out particularity, but in the sense of *omnia*, inclusive of all about all. He describes the question of being as "*the most basic and the most concrete*."⁸⁶ He says that "[e]verything we talk about, everything we have in view, [and] everything towards which we comport ourselves in any way, is being."⁸⁷ And he likens being to the Medieval *transcendentia*, which not only go beyond but include genera, and include all they discipline. "[T]he 'universality' of 'Being'," he says, "is not that of a *class* or *genus*. [Its universality] '*transcends*' any universality of genus."⁸⁸

Being ... is no class or genus of entities; yet it pertains to every entity. Its 'universality' is to be sought higher up. Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess. *Being is the transcendens pure and simple*.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 67-8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

However, we believe that, more specifically, for Heidegger, being is essence and existence collapsed, taken along with the ways this amalgam may be modally expressed. "Being lies in the fact that something is, and in its Being as it is," Heidegger writes, be it "in Reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity; in Dasein; in the 'there is'."⁹⁰ And, again, he says that "Being is that on the basis of which entities are, and are as they are."⁹¹ It might seem from these remarks that Heidegger holds being to be existence and essence, thatness and whatness, ever tied to one another yet still distinct. But, in fact, we think he takes existence into essence, and reserves for modal expression the job of deciding fact. Indeed, we think that, for him, questions of actuality and fact, or real existence, are trivial ones, having to do with mere beings (*Seienden*) and not their being (*Sein*). And we think that this is, again, the inheritance of Husserl's intuitivist essentialism.

Consider, again, our white piece of paper. In a stroke, we grasp it as *white*, and *as being white*; we grasp its whatness and thatness at once or what Heidegger calls its being. But in so doing, what we get at fundamentally is the intelligibility of the white paper; we get at the meaningful datum, "white piece of paper." And it is only subsequently, in a distinct act, that we explicate it in any number of ways; it is only in a distinct act, that we lay it out in one of its possible modes. For example, we lay it out, or interpret it, as present at hand, as *vorhanden*, or as set before us, as an item for inspection. Or, again, we lay it out as ready to hand, as *zuhanden*, or as an item of use, available to us in our practical living. But in either case, we articulate, or lay out, or express, a prior grasp of being, understood as intelligibility, in this way or that; we determine our datum, in this or that mode, and we do not bring anything new to it. We show that we take being to be essence and its modes.

D. A Notion Manifest as Question

If, again, we grasp being *a priori*, before we lay it out in any of its modes, we may wonder why it is manifest as question, as it is. For a grasp of being would seem to make needless any inquiry into it. But, in *Being and Time*, as in the *Prolegomena*, we have our answer; for our initial grasp of being is said to be implicit, undifferentiated, and dimmed. Our "understanding of Being," Heidegger says, "([one] which is already available to us) may fluctuate and grow dim, and border on mere acquaintance with a word," in "its ... indefiniteness."⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., p. 25.

So it is up to us to render it more determinate and explicit. And it “may be so infiltrated with traditional theories and opinions about Being that these remain hidden as sources of the way in which it is prevalently understood”⁹³ and so misunderstood. So it is up to us to penetrate beneath the accretive overlay. But, if this is true – if our initial grasp of being is both indeterminate and covered over – then it is easy to see how our *a priori* understanding of it functions for us as much as a mystery (*Ratsel*) as an answer.⁹⁴ It is easy to see how it is manifest for us as question.

Our understanding of being is implicit, and must be made explicit. It is indeterminate, and must be made determinate. It is covered over, and must be uncovered. But in order for explication, articulation, and excavation to be possible, we must remain in some touch with our source; and fortunately enough, we do. For Dasein, again is the being for whom its own being is an issue. It stands in inevitable relation to itself. And, insofar as it does so, it stands in inevitable relation to being: indeed, it grasps it. “[W]e always conduct our activities in an understanding of Being,” Heidegger writes. And from “[o]ut of this understanding arise both the explicit question of ... Being and the tendency that leads towards its conception.”⁹⁵ That is, from out of our notion of being come both our confusion about it and our capacity to know it. And for this reason, Heidegger says: “the question of Being is nothing other than the radicalization of an essential tendency-of-Being which belongs to Dasein itself – the pre-ontological understanding of Being.”⁹⁶

E. A Notion Serving as Criterion

Dasein, then, is at once its own answer and question. It is its own answer to the question of being, insofar as it understands it *a priori*. And yet it is its own question too, insofar as its understanding is implicit and vague. On the one hand, it knows its ground; but on the other, it does not know it as it would. It longs to become (more fully) what it is, longs to enter into deeper communion with what it already knows.

For this reason, Dasein serves as its own criterion. It serves as its own guide, in coming to know what it already knows, better. In this way, it is like the traditional soul. “Dasein’s ontico-ontological priority,” Heidegger tells us, “was

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 23. Heidegger’s word here is ‘enigma’. But ‘mystery’ also translates ‘*Ratsel*’.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

seen quite early, though Dasein itself was not grasped in its genuine ontological structure” That is, Dasein’s specialness among beings, as a guide to understanding beings in their being, was noted early on, even if it was not grasped fully, or in its full character as ecstatically temporal. “Aristotle,” Heidegger reports, “says: ... ‘Man’s soul is, in a certain way, entities’. The ‘soul’ which makes up the Being of man has *aisthesis* and *noesis* among its ways of Being, and in these it discovers all entities, both in the fact that they are, and in their Being as they are.” And,

Aristotle’s principle, which points back to the ontological thesis of Parmenides, is one which Thomas Aquinas has taken up in a characteristic discussion. Thomas is engaged in the task of deriving the ‘*transcendentia*’ — those characters of Being which lie beyond every possible way in which an entity may be classified as coming under some generic kind of subject-matter ..., and which belong necessarily to anything, whatever it may be. Thomas has to demonstrate that the *verum* is such a *transcendens*. He does this by invoking an entity which, in accordance with its very manner of Being, is properly suited to ‘come together with’ entities of any sort whatever. This distinctive entity ... is the soul (*anima*).⁹⁷

Dasein and the soul, as traditionally understood, have in common an isomorphic relation with being. Both are uniquely fit to “‘come together with being;’” or, as the inverted commas imply, both are already together with it, and thus are in a position to bring else in accord, too. Both serve in a criterial capacity. And it is in virtue of their notion(ing) of be-ing, that they do. Da-sein, and the soul, are ever underway to *Sein*, because, “in a certain way,” they are already there.

V. A DEFENSE OF LONERGAN’S NOTION

A. Experience Tells Us Our Notion of Being Is No More than Heuristic

Heidegger’s account of our inevitable concourse with being is beautiful. And it would be inhuman not to be drawn to it. But it is only partially true, we think; and so we offer a defense of Lonergan. To begin with, we suggest our *a priori* notion of being is no more than heuristic.

Heidegger holds that, in understanding ourselves, in our being, we thereby understand being itself, and so possess a standard for understanding beings in

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 34.

their being. We are in possession of being from the start. But, because our grasp of it is implicit, indeterminate, and dimmed, we must unpack, articulate, and re-illumine it; and it is to this enterprise that Heidegger invites us in his work. In particular, he invites us to struggle against our native tendency to cover being over, forget about it, and reduce it to mere beings.

However, we may wonder whether Heidegger's premise is too strong. Why think we understand ourselves in our being, and so understand being itself? It is clear that we do not do so explicitly, or fully articulately, or without getting in our own way; and these facts alone may explain our confusion. But it is also quite possible that we simply do not understand being, and merely intimate it; and, in fact, this is what our experience reveals.

Consider the instance in which we are searching for the definition of the circle. In the beginning, we have perhaps only an inkling of the relevant intelligibility, as well as of the matter of fact here. We experience ourselves to be progressively homing in on the relation between equal radii-length and roundness, and to be doing so on the field of an orientation to what is understandable *per se*. And, we experience ourselves to be increasingly convinced that our hypothesis is correct, on the field of an orientation to absolute truth. That is, we experience ourselves to be on the track of this or that instance of essence and existence, on the field of an orientation to essence and existence *per se*; but we do not experience ourselves to know these latter. Thus it would not seem sober to claim otherwise. It may well be that "God's knowledge of being is *a priori*." For if he exists, "he is the act of understanding that grasps everything about everything." But, by contrast, "we advance towards knowledge by asking the explanatory question, *Quid sit?* and the factual question *An sit?*"⁹⁸ That is, we begin in intention, and not knowledge. Or, at least, this is what our experience tells us.

B. Experience Tells Us Our Orientations to Essence and Existence Are Distinct

Moreover, experience tells us that our orientations to essence and existence are distinct. They are not, perhaps, separable; a real distinction need not imply separability. But they are distinct: they constitute two folds in our interrogative orientation to all.

Consider, again, our previous example. In series, we ask 'what' and 'why' questions. In the first place, we ask after the intelligibility or order at hand, and

⁹⁸ Lonergan, CWL 3 370.

we do so on the horizon of a wish to understand all. In the second, we ask after the truth of our hypothesis, and do so on the horizon of an interest in the unconditional. For "the notion of being remains incomplete on the level of intelligence; it moves conception forward to questions for reflection; it moves beyond single judgments to the totality of correct [ones] and ... it does not prescind from existence and actuality."⁹⁹ In the limit, we would know everything about everything. But we know act as limited by potency. And so we ask, first about essence, and then about existence; we make our way to being through distinct intentions of these.

Heidegger does not agree and, we believe, to his detriment. He holds that we intuit being, or essence, or existence taken into essence, in an act of mind which preceeds reflection. He holds that, immediately, we understand, and proceed to explicate. And so he considers judgment rather a fifth wheel, unnecessary for understanding itself, and liable to sediment meaning. In *Being and Time* it is "[b]y way of having a mood [that] Da-sein 'sees' possibilities, in terms of which it is,"¹⁰⁰ and by its 'projective understanding' that it "goes to make up existentially what we call [its] 'sight'."¹⁰¹ And it is by its 'interpretation' (*aus-legen*) and 'assertion' (*aus-sagen*) that it lays-out and says-out what it intuits.¹⁰² That is, it is by its ecstatic temporalizing that it grasps being and unpacks it. But, if this is so, then it is no surprise Dasein "is ... that sight which is directed upon Being as such,"¹⁰³ and no surprise that being is 'seen' *a priori*, via the self's sight of itself. It is no surprise being, understood as essence, is intuited *a priori*, prior to any interest in *realitas*.

CONCLUSION

We might conclude by asking after the importance of our topic. As we have seen, Heidegger holds our *a priori* notion of being to be possessive and to collapse essence and existence. That is, he holds our starting point to be full knowledge of reality, understood as essence, or intelligibility. And in this, he follows a distinguished Platonic, and Scotist, tradition. But we do not think he has adequate evidence for his stance; to the contrary we hold that we begin from mere intention of being, understood as really distinct essence and existence. And in this, we follow Lonergan, who in turn follows the tradition of Aquinas. But the

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 356.

¹⁰⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 188.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 188-203.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 186.

issue is of capital importance. For it regards not only the questions of who, most basically, we are, and what is our main manner of relation to reality; it has also ethical and political significance. It is well known that Heidegger, for a time, engaged with the Nazis and endorsed a Romantic authoritarianism. And his permanent philosophical ideal seems to be that of remaining in thrall to being, in its luminosity, or intelligibility, undisciplined by act or Good. If this is so, whatever in his work is beautiful must also be dangerous.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ For portraits of Heidegger's life which tie his political misdeeds to his Platonism, see for example Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," in *New York Review of Books*, 17, 21 October, 1971, pp. 50-54, and Jacques Taminiaux, *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker*, trans. Michael Gendre (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997).