being without one: deleuze and the medievals on transcendental unum

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INTRODUCTION

After a lifetime of research on the topic, Jan Aertsen in his *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, was unable to produce a single scholastic philosopher who denied in any way the transcendental convertibility of being (*ens*) and one (*unum*).[1] Every being, precisely inasmuch as it is a being, is one. The thesis enjoyed unchallenged hegemony for the entire medieval age (and beyond),[2] at certain singular points even achieving such a pitch of intensity as to blur the lines of first philosophy between 'ontology' and 'henology.'[3] This doctrinal uniformity is all the more surprising given the period's fiery debates concerning not only the nature of

transcendental predicates,[4] but their distinction,[5] number,[6] subject of inherence,[7] cognitive and theological functions,[8] etc. This prevailing consensus certainly points to a set of uniquely central ontological theses, shared all the way through the otherwise variegated and divisive period dominated by the rich metaphysics of 'the scholastic tradition.'[9]

Against this background, I here locate principled divergence between the metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze, as deployed in his *Difference and Repetition*,[10] and the commitment to the transcendental convertibility of being and unity pronounced throughout classical philosophy, from its sources in the ancients through to its explicit articulation in scholasticism. To show this, I first describe the nature of the commitment to the convertibility of being and unity as this is explained within certain paradigmatic medieval thinkers and their contemporary expositors, and as this emerged from out of its Platonic pre-history. I then situate Deleuze's departure from this commitment by locating the fundaments of his ontology of difference within the suppressed possibilities of the classical tradition: principally, in the problematic concepts created in the Neoplatonic discussion of the *other-than-one*, and in the Scotistic discussion of *ultimate difference*. After comparing Deleuze's strategy for opposing the transcendental *unum* to that of his contemporary, Alain Badiou, I go on to concretize Deleuze's divergence by staging a direct confrontation with the metaphysic of Thomas Aquinas. I suggest, by way of contrast, that whereas Aquinas deploys the transcendental *unum* in the three figures of *limitatio*, *essentia*, and *reditio*, these three expressions of unity are replaced by Deleuze with the alternative triplex of *difference*, *individuation*, and *repetition*. Deleuze's denial of the transcendental convertibility of being and unity is thus associated with some articulated – yet, unpursued – theoretical options buried within the long tradition of classical metaphysics, and the ontological affirmation of these is shown to stand in stark and polemical divergence to, arguably, this tradition's most fundamental metaphysical postulate.

This paper aims to continue the project of establishing a *rapprochement* between Deleuze's singularly powerful heterological ontology and medieval metaphysics,

both of which represent high points in the history of ontology.[11] This not only presents a challenging alternative to the basic suppositions of scholastic metaphysics, serving as a spur toward reappropriating medieval transcendental thought in a newly refreshed, systematic context,[12] but also invites a reoriented reading of Deleuze's principal ontological work, *Difference and Repetition*— following after the suggestions of certain Deleuzian commentators that the text rewards consideration from multiple historical points of view, given its complex dialogue with the tradition of metaphysics.[13] This paper thus continues on, down into the uniquely fundamental level of transcendental unity, further establishing 'Deleuze's scholasticism,' which association is more and more being emphasized.[14]

Transcendental Unum: Sense and Inception

First, let us consider the sense of the transcendental convertibility of being and *unum*, before, second, turning to trace the historical origins of this doctrine.

What is transcendentality in general? What is transcendental unity in particular? The doctrine of the transcendentals as it is classically understood concerns the universal determinations which attend all beings precisely inasmuch as they are beings. The name '*transcendentalia*' comes from the Latin '*transcendere*', which speaks to the sense in which determinations of this sort transcend or step beyond constriction to any of the particular Aristotelian categories of being, embracing or going through the entire scope of being, and perhaps also exceeding entirely the whole order of categorial reality, thereby including within their scope the predicates applicable to the divine as *sui generis* first and highest being. 'Transcendental commonality' pertains to the whole extent of what can be referred to as *being*.[15] All transcendental terms are thus equal in extension, differing from one another in intension.[16]

Traditionally, the transcendentals' relation to being has been construed in the way that properties follow upon their subjects.[17] Wherever being is concretely present, its distinctive properties invariably accompany it. Properties follow in virtue of

their subject, and so transcendental properties correspond proportionally to both being's degree and special categorical mode.[18] There is thus a natural necessity requiring that the *propria passiones* follow upon its form/ground, as an explication or elaboration of the nature of the ground—which formality is not, yet, logically contained in the abstract quiddity of the form/ground itself, as a consequence of which it would instead be an essential accident. The transcendental properties 'one', 'true', and 'good', as co-present with being in every case of its concretion, are said to be 'convertible' with being. The question then, is what this convertibility of being and unity amounts to in the scholastic tradition.

There was consensus among the scholastics on both the convertibility of being and unity, and on the meaning of this 'unity'—in all cases, it was taken to mean an entity's intrinsic *indivision* or *undividedness*.[19] In this, the tradition was continuing and affirming a definition first proposed by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*.[20] This undividedness, in the words of Aquinas in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, is said to lie "closest to being."[21] For the most part, *ens* and *unum* were distinguished by these thinkers only logically or conceptually—*unum* adding nothing real to being, or more properly, adding only negation, only a privation of actual division.[22] It was common practice in medieval philosophy to distinguish the transcendental sense of *unum*, running through all of the categories, from the mathematical sense of *unum*, restricted to the category of quantity. These two 'ones' are each in their own way opposed to 'multiplicity.'[23] Aquinas offers a succinct account of this in his *Summa Theologiae* (Ia. q. 11, art. 2).[24] The 'one' of quantity is the principle of number; it is that which, by being repeated, comprises the sum (the multiple).[25] Aquinas says that there is a direct opposition between 'one' and 'many' arithmetically, because they stand as measure to thing measured, as just-one to many-ones. Likewise, transcendental unity is opposed to multiplicity, but in this case not directly. Its opposition is not to the many-ones *per se*, but rather to the *division* essentially presupposed in and formal with respect to the multiplication of actual multiplicity. This tracks with a consistent distinction in Aquinas between division and plurality in which division is seen as ontologically and logically prior.[26]

Transcendental unity then, has a certain priority to its predicamental counterpart.

We will return below to the consequences for contemporary ontology that follow upon this fact that, in its developed form, it was division, not plurality, that was taken by the classical tradition to be the precise contrary to transcendental unity. Having just clarified the sense of the transcendental *unum*, and worked out its function as a property with which being is proportionally convertible, we now turn to reconstruct the historical inception of the doctrine that each case of being is without exception 'one'. As we recount the original expositions of this doctrine, we simultaneously glimpse, in a fragmentary fashion, certain notions which were elaborated by way of an oppositional complementarity to the metaphysics of 'unity' then in the process of becoming. It is at these points of systematic exclusion, we will see, that the vocabulary Deleuze chooses to express his rejection of the transcendental *unum* can be adequately situated.

The historically first treatise on the transcendentals, marking its origin as an explicit doctrine in the scholastic period, was written by the 13th century theologian Philip the Chancellor.[27] Interestingly, although Philip names unity among transcendental predicates, he does not provide an independent derivation of unity alongside the predicates of being, truth, and goodness. He deploys the notion of indivision/unity as *explanans* of each of the further transcendental predicates, including even being itself.[28] Unity receives both a recognizably Aristotelian definition, and a definite prioritization among the various transcendental predicates. This points to the unique context of the formulation of the doctrine of transcendental unity in high scholasticism. The medieval mind was beginning to loosen the bonds of the rigid Aristotelian categorial schema, by considering what is common to all beings as such. In terms of expression, these commonalities maintained a generally Aristotelian flavor, but in terms of the effective doctrinal commitments, there can be detected at the beginning of the scholastic treatment of the transcendentals the noticeably Platonic ontological precedence of unity, and the near identification of being with some form of unity.[29]

It has been contested that the pre-history of the scholastic doctrine of the transcendentals can be found within Platonism.[30] To understand the reasons for the ubiquitous commitment to the convertibility of 'being' and 'unity' in the medieval period, it is evident that we must trace their coordination back through Neoplatonism.[31] Let us consider first Proclus. In his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* he dialectically considers a variety of possible ontologically-self-sufficient first principles, swiftly establishing that what is entirely otherwise-than-one is impossible.[32] He introduces a slightly more detailed argument by indirect proof in the first proposition of his *Elements of Theology*. This begins with the supposition that there is a manifold that in no way participates unity, which he defines as "an infinity of infinities"— each of the infinite parts consisting of a division into infinite parts, etc.[33] If a being was to in no way participate in unity, Proclus says it would be condemned to indefinite formlessness, retreating from all proportionality, equality, and presence—so that it in no way could be called 'a being.' All beings must in some way be unities, therefore— for *to be*, while being in no way *one* is an ontological impossibility, unthinkable and reprehensible, indeed the first thought to be expelled within a general presentation of metaphysics.

In denying being-without-one, Proclus has given us a rich description of its hypothetical properties. Something similar happens in Iamblichus' *Theology of Arithmetic*.[34] He famously sets out the three primary determinations of being and number: the Monad, the Dyad, and the Triad. The Monad, he argues is the formal-exemplary principle of number, but it is the Triad which is in fact the first being-number. The *indefinite dyad* is harder to place. It is "the first to have separated itself from the Monad"[35] and is likewise a certain kind of principle of the Triad, inasmuch as the Triad is otherwise than the Monad. It is not, though, anything like an exemplary-formal principle, in terms of establishing the intrinsic character of that which is number. The indefinite dyad serves the opposite function—not of making or reproducing the same as the one, after the one, but rather making more than and different from the one. The indefinite dyad is outside of the Monad precisely by its function as the principle or agent of differentiation, dissipation,

and multiplication, which despite this is not itself in any way one. Yet, Iamblichus asserts, the entire operation of the indefinite dyad occurs within the economy of the Monad: "the Dyad is perpetually subordinate to the Monad, as matter is to form", and this because it has no ontological independence, and indeed is not itself formally or exemplarily being. The differential not-one operates merely relatively within a given initial element, and so presupposes the priority of a unity which is considered absolute.

Plotinian 'matter' receives similar description in *Enneads* II.4 and III.6.[36] As the receptacle of form, Plotinus holds that it stands in a privative relationship to all that is bestowed uniquely through form (II.5,4; III.6,14). Because entity follows upon form, this means that matter itself is not a real entity, but as a principle is 'something-other-than' the excellence of being. Intrinsically, therefore – prior to and independent of any participation – it can be described by the terms opposite to the properties of form: unlimited, great-and-small, false, multiple, unequal (II.4,11-16; III.6,16). Plotinus offers throughout his treatises concerning matter several such rich descriptions of the characteristics inherent in these ontologically impossible 'others' which are not, and cannot be, because they are without unity. The being of this not-one is only in the context of its being subjugated by form, which imports and imposes unity and limit (I.8,3; II.4,13).

Undoubtedly, the dialectical configuration of Plato's *Parmenides* lies in the background of this Neoplatonic pre-history of the doctrine of transcendental unity.[37] Consider the final deduction of the dialogue (165e-166c), which can be read as a Platonic injunction against any ascription of being to that which is without unity. The context of this injunction is Plato's Parmenides considering what must be the case for 'the others' on the condition that unity in no way is. On the basis of what appears to be an axiomatic decision, Plato denies the possibility of any such being-without-one, both for being as well as for thought. For Plato has Parmenides say: "The others won't be one... And surely they won't be many either, since oneness would be present in things that are many. For if none of them is one, they are all nothing—so they couldn't be many... Therefore, if oneness isn't

present in the others, the others are neither many nor one."[38] Plato denies at the onset even the intelligibility of being-without-one. Although it is there announced as a rejected concept for the first time, being-without-one receives no description for itself in the *Parmenides*. It is no sooner stated as an other-than-one than it is denied any possibility of being.

Other-Than-One, Ultimate Difference, and Pure Multiplicity

We have adequate material now to scaffold Deleuze's founding ontological thesis, such that its significance as the supreme departure from transcendental unity will be felt with all of the gravity it rightly deserves. Deleuze states that, "it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference."[39] Rather than being analogously distributed through receptive limitation by the variety of essences, being is affirmed immediately and in its full and single sense of that which is the precise formal opposite of *ens indivisum*—difference itself becomes the highest object of affirmation.[40] Unity is not primitive in being, but rather the converse: "difference is behind everything, but behind difference, there is nothing."[41] That which is named being in the plenary and total sense is not the simplicity and unicity of God as *ens infinitum*,[42] but is instead, in Deleuze's coinage, "the Disparate".[43]

I would like to stress how directly this 'pure' difference contrasts with the meaning of scholastic 'indivision'. Deleuze insists, for one thing, that such a difference must be *internal*—he disavows any interpretation which would make 'difference-in-itself' merely relative to already-constituted items—an extrinsic, empirical difference between thing and thing.[44] *Internal division*, though, perfectly opposes the scholastic *unum*, which is defined as internal *in*division. Likewise – and this is where the Platonic characterization of being-without-one resurfaces – the difference Deleuze intends is 'pure' because it at no point reduces to self-identical (undivided) units, but on the contrary is "constituted by a difference which itself refers to other differences."[45] In this, Deleuze speaks exclusively, in terms nearly-identical to those which the Neoplatonists deny entirely, of being as a "state of infinitely doubled difference, which resonates to infinity."[46] We can see, just from

these few statements, how Deleuze's saying being of pure difference precisely departs from the scholastic thesis that all being is *per se* undivided, and from the Platonic thesis that no being is without unity. It is less the case that Deleuze mints entirely new concepts of which to say being, and more that he rescues the exiles of the classical tradition, condemned and considered impossible there, in order to give them an opposite ontological valuation. In this classical tradition, with which Deleuze was quite familiar, there was conspicuous effort placed into articulating, for the sake of its ontological denial and subordination, that which has in all respects a privative or subtractive relationship to unity. Contrary to these ontological evaluations, but precisely consistent with their respective descriptions, Deleuze says being itself of absolute difference dividing to infinity, which division is the very element of separation from unity. Against the classical tradition, he makes these subordinated elements ontologically primitive and absolute.[47]

Deleuze repeats this precise inversion even more dramatically within the context of Duns Scotus and his school. That which in the Scotistic disputations had a problematic or privative relationship to being, is in Deleuze affirmed fully as the whole of being.[48]

Scotus famously developed and affirmed a univocal sense of being, predicable in such a way that, he says: "All categories, species, and individuals as well as all essential parts of the categories and the uncreated being include being quidditatively."[49] But, Scotus understood that he must at the same time develop a general principle for the differentiation of univocal being. This was a uniquely pressing concern, given the unprecedented scope of univocal sameness which he had afforded to the predication of being. Scotus could not suppose, with analogy, that "being" is a confused concept, inclusive of its differences.[50] Raised to the level of quidditatively empty generality and precise simplicity, differences must be introduced into being externally. Scotus was thus obliged to develop the concept of *ultimate difference*. As univocal being is purely determinable, ultimate difference is pure determination, and is the precise formal reason for entitative

differentiation.

Scotus went quite far in his definition of ultimate difference's character.[51] That which differs in this difference must be primarily diverse, that is, having no sameness, participating in no shared identity. Scotus argued that if even 'being' or 'thing' were common to the 'sides' of ultimate difference, then this would preclude its primary diversity, and so it could not then be the precise formal reason for determinate entitative difference. Thus, what Scotus inaugurated in his notion of the 'ultimate differences' is the concept of pure, "self-different"[52], transcendental difference— "unreified" absolute diversity which is not even the differing *of* thing from thing.[53]

But this difference-in-itself entirely exclusive of identity introduced an insuperable problem for Scotus and his school. By definition, it seemed, univocal being could in no way be predicable of ultimate difference itself. If being was predicable, then the supposedly ultimate difference would instead be merely a difference *between* things or beings. But, if being cannot be predicated of ultimate difference, then what ontological status can it have? Just as "matter" remained an ontologically ambiguous but necessary principle in Neoplatonism, "ultimate difference" remained an ontologically ambiguous but necessary principle in Scotism. Scotus tried to evade the conclusion that ultimate differences do not exist by saying that univocal being is predicable *in quale* or "denominatively" rather than *in quid*, that is, being is predicable in a secondary and derivative sense of ultimate difference. But this committed Scotus to a rebirth of a certain kind of cryptic analogy in his notion of being, inasmuch as he inadvertently re-introduced priority and posteriority into its sense.[54] This likewise implied, interestingly, that ultimate difference was thought to be even more different from being than God is from creatures (given that in the latter case, an embracing univocal concept was still available). Almost every logically possible alternative solution was proposed by Scotus' followers, but, by the time of scholasticism's end, the problematic ontological status of the *ultima differentia* remained unresolved.[55]

I have argued elsewhere that Deleuze can be productively read as the first Scotist to fully affirm both univocal being and ultimate difference, predicating the former of the latter without reservation.[56] This claim directly relates to how Deleuze's notion of being stands with respect to the problematic of transcendental unity. One might conclude that the *aporia* in which Scotus's school was caught is grounded in the ubiquitous shared commitment to the convertibility of being and unity. Univocal being was not predicated of ultimate difference alone and exclusively, because where being is predicated, it carries with it as a property a proportionate unity or indivision, whereas *ultima differentia* is pure division without any unitive core. That the latter is not even entertained appears clearly in Scotus's definitional argument against being's predicability of ultimate difference— that "then there would be *different beings*," which highlights the presupposed exteriority of being and difference.[57] Scotus does not attempt, nor does he countenance as possible, being's predication of difference-in-itself. The Scotistic school was unable to bring their master's concepts to consistency, just as Scotus himself was unable to, because of the commitment to transcendental unity.

Deleuze's 'intervention' into classical metaphysics (which consists in predicating univocal being of difference-in-itself: expressed as much in the *other-than-one* as in the *ultimate difference*) is manifestly a clear and direct contradiction of transcendental unity— both as this is incipiently phrased in Neoplatonism, and as it deployed in the commitments of late scholasticism.

But what is more, Deleuze engages this inversion more radically than even those in his milieu who claim this same project as their own. Recall that transcendental unity is directly opposed to actual division, and only in virtue of actual division is opposed to certain instances of multiplicity— the contrary of transcendental unity, therefore, is not precisely stated in terms of "pure multiplicity". This context allows us to decide on a debate between Deleuze and his contemporary Alain Badiou, with respect to their broadly shared task of disavowing an ontology predicated upon the centrality of unity.[58] This task in Deleuze is phrased as the critique of identity, or of the ontology of the "(n-1)", and in Badiou is stated by the

axiomatic decision of the non-being of the one.[59] But, they phrase their ontologies of being-without-one in importantly different ways. In *Being and Event*, Badiou sets out to replace the mathematical dyad of just-one/many-ones with an ontology of the pure multiple, which, being by stipulation in no way one, is situated within the presentative count-as-one. Badiou's phraseology of rejection circulates around the "pure/inconsistent multiple", which justifies his identification of ontology with pure mathematics.[60] But, from what we have seen above in terms of scholastic transcendental thought, this strategy for rejecting transcendental unity is not precisely to the historical point—Deleuze rightly calls the ontological use of the mathematical opposition of just-one to many-ones a "distorted dialectic".[61] Although pure multiplicity implies the contradiction of unity – for the reasons already seen – it does so only as parasitic upon *division* as that which both precedes multiplicity and as that which itself formally contradicts unity. But it is this division which Deleuze intends by his concept of pure difference. Univocal being is said immediately and precisely of this very division, difference-in-itself. If, then, there is to be an axiomatic decision against an ontology of the "one", or for a "One-less ontology"[62], this can be pursued only confusedly under the mathematical banner of the 'pure multiple'. It would be the same confusion to mistake Deleuze's saying being of pure difference – where the latter is understood appropriately as the precise contrary of *indivisum*, as nothing but the simple dissolution of 'the one' – with "an ontological precomprehension of Being as One."[63]

Divergent Connections: Deleuze and Aquinas

To concretize what has been said, we now turn to a direct explication of some of the ontological implications of transcendental unity, setting out in the process Deleuze's specific divergence from three deployments of the *unum* to be found in the work of Thomas Aquinas. I designate these three instances of unity by the terms *limitatio*, *essentia*, and *reditio*. *Limit*, as an entitative negation separating one entity from another; *essence* or *form*, as the positive and unitive core of a being and principle of its cohesion; and *return* or *subsisting recollection*, as a certain synthetic unity by which an entity's acts are said to perfect its being. These are some of

the ontic or entitative structures which correspond to the general ontological or transcendental expression of the convertibility of being with unity. In what follows I will indicate how Deleuze departs in turn from each of these concretizations of unity.

First, let us consider limit and its connection to unity. The indivision of all concrete being inasmuch as it is being tended to have a complementary feature enumerated alongside it, that of being divided from all else. Almost all of the medievals combined internal-indivision and external-division under the single term: *unum*. Aquinas, for instance, succinctly states that "unity is that which is undivided in itself and divided from all others."[64] By being undivided within its own identity, an entity is essentially set off from, delimited over against, others.[65] A unified being is not compromised or complicated with others, but retains instead a certain absoluteness. A unified being is in retaining its limit by which it opposes its other. This was considered, by some medieval thinkers, as identical to having form and definition. Therefore, transcendental unity implies that all that participates in being takes part in limit and opposition.

Ontological negation, Deleuze states repeatedly in *Difference and Repetition*, comes in two forms: limitation, by which it is set off from its others, and opposition, by which it is incompatible with what is otherwise than it. Deleuze repeatedly criticizes the ontological rights of either such form of negation, seeing in them an alien intrusion which distorts the pure affirmation of being.[66] Deleuze contends that 'this is not that' is ontologically inadequate, that this external comparison fails to express what comprises things in their proper being.[67] The situation wherein we are constrained to say 'this is not that' is often construed, Deleuze says, as being the necessary metaphysical consequence of denying Parmenidean monism—of affirming plurality in being.[68] On the contrary, Deleuze can be read as attempting to affirm the multiplicity and diversity of entity, without at the same time importing the ontological negative as a real principle, which negative limit goes along with the transcendental *unum*.[69]

Next, consider the role that essence or form plays within the instantiation of transcendental unity. Because "all negation is founded in affirmation"[70], the limitation dividing one from another has its basis in the absolutely posited identities of the items divided. This affirmation of entity with reference to its positive and intrinsic determination, its *essentia*, is what Aquinas names the transcendental *res*. Aquinas says in his *Commentary on the Sentences*: that, absolutely speaking, "*res* is said to be that which has a determinate and firm existence in a nature."[71] This matches with *ens* considered absolutely, but expressed negatively, which we have seen is the meaning of the transcendental *unum*. *Ens* taken absolutely is therefore equally *res* and *unum*.[72]

This triad is of decidedly Aristotelian origin, with Aristotle saying in the *Metaphysics* that "'one man' and 'man' are the same thing, and so are 'existent man' and 'man.'"[73] The three are bound together by the mediation of *essentia/forma*, which is – following both Aristotle and Boethius – both the ontological principle through which an entity is a being and that through which it is itself undivided. Substantial form takes the role of determining an entity's quiddity and of being that in and through which an entity exists inasmuch as it is an intrinsic structuring principle.[74] The form imports unity to the composite, on account of the fact that, considered in itself, essence is a *unitas per seipsam*—it is qualitatively and definitionally undivided, and therefore exemplarily one.[75] The intrinsic internal indivision of that which is follows directly on its being constituted through the essence itself, which is what is.[76] In short, transcendental unity implies that the principle of an entity's being is itself a unity.

By contrast, Deleuze furthers the initiative of his avowed predecessors (principally Whitehead and Simondon), in the criticism of the ontological primacy of essence/ form within the constitution of concrete entity.[77] He approaches this topic as a part of his extraordinarily complex theory of *individuation*.[78] Individuation is ontologically and explanatorily prior to either extensity and quality, the two forms of "generality."[79] What this means is that the unity of form is posterior to numerical unity.[80] But, Deleuze claims the intension of individuality is 'intensity,' which is

just the differing of an internal difference.[81] So, numerical unity and diversity has its ground in the virtual region of pre-individual, individuating differences.[82] The unity of form (the determinations of quality/extensity) are accounted for through the process of individuation, as the necessary cancellation of intensive difference outside of itself, as *explicatio*—covering over the difference constituting the individual in a kind of transcendental illusion.[83] "The source of the production of real objects"[84], the actualization and epiphany[85] of individuality and its necessary connection with formality,[86] is not through an immanent formation by a *unitas per seipsam*, but rather is through the differential processes of pre-individual being-without-one.[87] Deleuze can be read, in this, as driving a wedge between *ens* and *unum* by supplanting the ontological middle term of the *res*.[88]

Finally, consider how the *unum* is expressed by a certain form of entitative *reditio*. The transcendental triad *ens-res-unum* is worked out in more detail by Aquinas, in a passage from the *De Veritate* (q. 2, art. 2, ad. 2), where he provides a rare definition of the term "subsistence", the name for being *simpliciter*.[89] Aquinas says that,

> the return (*reditio*) to one's own essence is, in the *Book of Causes*, called nothing other than the very subsistence of a thing in itself; for non-subsistent forms are poured out over that which is other, and by no means are recollected to themselves; but subsistent forms are poured out to other things, perfecting and influencing them, so that, however, they yet retain themselves in their immanence.[90]

It is commonplace to note that inasmuch as a being is, it acts.[91] What Aquinas adds here is that inasmuch as a being is and acts, it involves an integrative gathering of the plurality of acts back toward the identity of a convergent center, a core of ontological sameness, which sameness of the ground is recognized both in the formal similitude or resemblance of ground and consequent, and also in the coherence of the consequents. Ultimately, this ontological return aims at the continuance and the perfection of the nature, which is expressed as the natural

overflow of first act (*ens*) into second act (*bonum*).[92] This *reditio* or 'subsisting recollection' represents a particularly definite deployment and articulation of transcendental unity, inasmuch as it is a claim that the entity is undivided in terms of essence/activity. The entity in acting is undivided (*unum*) from its identity (*res*) to the same degree that it is a being (*ens*).[93]

By contrast, Deleuze denies that in the heart of being as such, there is involved any such recollection—in denying the *unitas per seipsam* of form/essence as intrinsic constitutive principle, there remains nothing in the entity towards the perfection of which action might return. This is phrased by Deleuze as the general rejection of any ontological repetition of the same.[94] The same does not return—only the different returns.[95] What this means is that the 'return' of present action/affect into its ontological ground is its dissolution within the difference which determines it.[96] What proceeds from this ground in individuation and actualization is the new, washed clean of all identity or real sameness.[97] The superficial resemblance of the affect/action to the past present is without ontological foundation, their succession is without identifiable internal linkage.[98] The entity is disarticulated into a plurality of affects. The coherence of substance-accident indivision is shattered no less than essence's primitive unity.

Implications and Conclusions

Deleuze's conceptual creations are always "fiercely new, [and] completely disconcerting."[99] And yet, despite their novelty, Deleuze manages to (in some inimitable way) remain in consistent, often profound, conversation with his historical predecessors. In this piece, I have traced one such line of connection, revolving around the medieval thesis of transcendental unity. The fact of Deleuze's divergence from this thesis, and a few of this departure's most salient dimensions – principally, its strategic resurrection and revaluation of both the Neoplatonic *other-than-one* and the Scotistic *ultimate difference* – have been made clear. I want to gesture, by way of conclusion, toward several connected problematics that are opened up from out of the unprecedented and radical fact of the disarticulation

of being and unity in Deleuzian ontology. These are, if you will, some of the implications for further thought which the idea of transcendental being-without-one makes possible.

A first implication follows simply upon the fact that, thanks to Deleuze's monumental efforts, there exists, at last, a notion of being which withdraws in some measure from, and can be articulated independently of, unity. Such an acknowledgement within metaphysics – that being-without-one can be thought and what is more, can even be existentially affirmed – implies that contemporary metaphysics is no longer permitted the luxury to languor naively in an unassessed assumption of being and unity's immediate sameness.[100] Henceforth, if the transcendental *unum* is to appear at all as a theorem within the text of metaphysics, this can only be justifiable inasmuch as it first becomes something won in the creative effort of argumentation, rather than remaining a thing merely presumed to have been always-already obscurely established and universally supposed. Thus, Deleuze's challenging divergence makes being's transcendental *unity or disunity*, perhaps for the first time, a genuine *problem and question* for thought.[101] When faced with the imperative to respond to this abyssal question, though, what is immediately evident is that contemporary metaphysics does not yet wield concepts adequate to the task of prosecuting transcendental disputation at this level of fundamentality.[102] The requisite methodology by which the conclusion of transcendental unity could even be conceived as susceptible of proof has yet to be elaborated as such. What this means is that by articulating being-without-one as an available ontological alternative, Deleuze simultaneously grants to contemporary metaphysics a historically singular task of conceptual creation.[103] That is: to thematically reconceive transcendental derivation, which investigation will take a completely unprecedented character inasmuch as it is not permitted to take the transcendental *unum* for granted as basic to the sense of being.

Further, exactly because the *unum* can no longer function as an incontestable *arche* and global *explanans* of transcendental derivation, there follows immediately a chain of disruptions to the received conceptualizations of the remaining

transcendental predicates, and a corresponding disarticulation of their presumed systematic intercommunication.[104] The transcendental decentering we've charted here does not stop with unity, but extends as a direct consequence by way of the excised *unum* to *all* of the traditional 'properties' of being. Deleuze's divergence thus transforms these remaining transcendental *loci* into so many discrete, once-again-living problematics. They live again by having their apparently settled character shaken, and their basic premises precipitously inverted. This re-opens the history of late scholastic transcendental *disputationes* in a way – characteristic of Deleuze – which is both creatively polemical and uniquely contentual.[105] Each of these complex historical discussions, in which the various transcendental notions were originally and expertly forged, have become susceptible once more to a dramatic engagement—one which is able to take place in the very terms of the scholastic participants, while yet proposing a standpoint entirely alien to anything which medieval philosophy could have imagined. Armed as contemporary thought is with the fertile exteriority of Deleuze's being-without-one, understood to be an explicit divergence from the transcendental *unum*, we can with validity stage and perform a certain grand metaphysical theater, which consists in injecting or insinuating a specifically Deleuzian voice into the midst of the high scholastic discussions on the transcendentals, as though in one of these classical disputes someone were to proclaim: "*Sed contra*, we hold that being and unity are not convertible; for Deleuze has said that being is said primarily and exclusively of internal division. But unity is defined as the negation of internal division, and therefore it is not inevitable that unity be considered a property convertible with being."

The possibility of such a critical intervention – or interruption – is of no merely idle interest. A Deleuzian interjection at these disputations directly complicates and forestalls at their point of codification the historically definitive formulations of the transcendentals *verum* and *bonum*. These transcendental properties of being, although not always explicitly affirmed as *transcendentalia*, were even still to have an immeasurable influence upon modern philosophy's major

metaphysical tradition.[106] Deleuze's being-without-one can thus be redeployed as an unregistered possibility at certain historically strategic points, to force the scholastic disputants – and their contemporary advocates – to begin again their deductions of these transcendental predicates, faced with the high standard of an unsubdued possibility of a deep ontological *disunity*. The possibility of such a contentual return and critical reassessment of medieval transcendental thought as a whole by way of Deleuze's affirmation of being-without-one thus accords fully with the fragmentary attempts made by certain contemporary thinkers (Agamben, Badiou, and Nancy) in their efforts to reappropriate aspects of the medieval transcendental tradition, and to discover a vantage point by which to address this tradition from its conceptual 'outside'.[107] Such a perspective, I suggest, is won with particular poignancy and directness in Deleuze's rigorous conceptualization of being-without-one.

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NOTES

1. Jan Aertsen, Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

2. See: Augustine, De Ordine, trans. Silvano Borruso (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 1968) II, c. 7, n. 24: "the consideration of all philosophers is concerned with the one (unum)"; Alexander Baumgarten, Metaphysics: A Critical Translation with Kant's Elucidations, Selected Notes, and Related Materials, trans. Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), §73 "The ONE is that whose determinations are inseparable, and indeed the TRANSCENDENTALLY ONE is that whose determinations as such are inseparable per se. Therefore, every being is transcendentally one"; §116 "Transcendental unity is absolutely necessary; hence, it has no opposite"; G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, trans. Peter C. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 127: "the whole of philosophy is nothing else but a study of the definition of unity."

3. Jan Aertsen. "Ontology or Henology in Medieval Philosophy: Thomas Aquinas, Master Eckhart, and Berthold of Moosberg" in On Proclus and His Influence in Medieval Philosophy (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 120–40.

4. This is primarily due to the influence of Scotus, who challenges the criterion of commonality as the defining feature of transcendentality. See: Wolter, Allan B. The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publishing, 1946), 4–13; Aertsen, Transcendental Thought, 382–93.

5. This is, again, thanks to Scotus, who holds that the commonly convertible transcendental properties are distinguished from being by a formal distinction, rather than the more common conceptual distinction. Aertsen, Transcendental Thought, 418–26; 612–3; Jan Aertsen, "Being and One: The Doctrine of the Convertible Transcendentals in Duns Scotus." Franciscan Studies 56 (1998): 47–68.

6. It is almost exclusively through the influence of Aquinas that the traditional four transcendentals were increased to six. This innovation did not last, and by the time of Suarez the traditional four had been restored (Transcendental Thought, 608–11). The topic of res and aliquid has been a point of some concern for Thomists. See: Michael J. Rubin, "The Place of 'Thing' and 'Something' in Aquinas's Order of the Transcendentals." The Thomist 81, no.3 (2017): 395–436.

7. With the exception of Eckhart, the medievals understood the subject of inherence to be the concrete entity. Eckhart alone understands transcendental convertibility to be a property of abstract terms, applicable to God alone (Ibid., 341–45). See: Robert J. Dobie, "Meister Eckhart's 'Ontological Philosophy of Religion'." The Journal of Religion 82, no.4 (2002): 563–85.; Dobie, "'Unum Est Indistinctum': Meister Eckhart's Dialectical Theology," in Logos and Revelation: Ibn 'Arabi, Meister Eckhart, and Mystical Hermeneutics (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 123–58.; Kurt Flasch. Meister Eckhart: Philosopher of Christianity, trans. Anne Schindel and Aaron Vanides (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 75-87

8. Wouter Goris. The Scattered Field: History of Metaphysics in the Postmetaphysical Era (Leuven: Peeters Publishing, 2004).

9. For the sake of brevity in my exposition, I have primarily focused on Aquinas in my analysis of transcendental unity. Where there are clear and relevant disputes or differences between his approach and other prominent scholastics, I have tried to note this, and to describe any particular peculiarities about the Thomistic position. For the most part, I take Aquinas's position on the unum to be both clear and representative, and so do not fear that I will fall into an overly-narrow

conception of medieval thought, by particularly honing in on this aspect of Aquinas'. I think I receive adequate warrant for this belief through the testimony of Aertsen, who says: "About thirty years after the beginning of the doctrine in Philip the Chancellor, the medieval theory of the transcendentals acquired a classic formulation in Thomas Aquinas. His systematic account of the transcendental properties of being in De Veritate q. 1, a. 1, became an authoritative model in the history of the doctrine" (Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought, 270). For the centrality of the transcendentals within Aquinas' thought, see: Jan Aertsen, "The Philosophical Importance of the Doctrine of the Transcendentals in Thomas Aquinas." Revue Internationale de Philosophie 52, no.204 (1998): 249–68, and his chapter on Thomas in Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought, 209–71. For Aertsen's most expanded study, see his Medieval Philosophy and The Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas (Leiden: Brill, 1996), where he says on p. 23, "the doctrine of the transcendentals is not, as it has been suggested, 'a small, rather insignificant part' of his metaphysics, but is of fundamental importance for his thought." Cornelio Fabro seconds this estimation, saying that Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals "perhaps constitutes the most dense and formal text in the whole history of Western thought." See his "The Transcendentality of Ens-Esse and the Ground of Metaphysics." International Philosophical Quarterly 6, no.3 (1996), 407. L.B. Geiger gives Aquinas's doctrine of the transcendentals the following estimation: "The entire philosophy of participation is therefore founded precisely on the expression of the problem of the transcendentals, these absolutely given universals of reality. The complexity or simplicity of systems augments or diminishes in the measure of its approaching more or less to the explicit knowledge of the terminus to which they are secretly attracted [translation my own]" La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas D'Aquin (Paris: Vrin, 1953), 326, n.1.

10. Gilles Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

11. For a general overview which is sympathetic to this valorization of Deleuze's work in the context of the history of metaphysics, see: A.W. Moore, The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics: Making Sense of Things (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 542–80.

12. Such reappropriations have been fruitfully pursued in recent memory, where speculative engagement with scholastic thought has been enlivened and renewed by being placed into contact with the radically divergent—principally with the thinking of Hegel and Heidegger. See: Olivia Blanchette, Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003); Ferdinand Ulrich, Homo Abyssus: The Drama of the Question of Being, trans. D.C. Schindler (Washington DC: Humanum Academic Press, 2018).

13. James Williams, "Difference and Repetition," in The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze, ed. Daniel W. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4: "The dialogue entertained with the tradition has many voices and the voice selected as dominant then conditions not only the place of the others, but also our understanding of the main terms of the book. There is a different Difference and Repetition, when Nietzsche, Bergson, Plato, or Hume is taken as the main influence or opponent."

14. See: Migue de Beistegui, Miguel, Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 296.; Lucas Buchanan Carroll, "Deleuze Among the Scotists: Difference-In-Itself and Ultima Differentia." Deleuze and Guattari Studies 16, no.3 (2022): 331–78; Philip Goodchild, "Why is philosophy so compromised with God?" in Deleuze and Religion, ed. Mary Bryden (New York: Routledge, 2001), 156–66; Greg Hainge and Jason Cullen, "Formulating God: The Ongoing Place of Theology in the Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze." Culture, Theory and Critique 52, no.2–3 (2011): 303–19. Eleanor Kaufman, Deleuze, the Dark Precursor:

Dialectic, Structure, Being (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 1-27, 185-192.; Stéfan Leclercq, "La présence de Jean Duns Scot dans l'œuvre de Gilles Deleuze, ou la généalogie du concept d'heccéité." Symposium 7, no.2 (2003): 143–58.; Andrew T. LaZella, "Crowned Anarchy and Nomadic Distribution: Gilles Deleuze's Transformative Appropriation of Duns Scotus." Essays in Medieval Studies 28, no.1 (2012): 23–34; Mary Beth Mader, "Whence Intensity? Deleuze and the Revival of a Concept," in Gilles Deleuze and Metaphysics, ed. Alain Beaulieu, Edward Kazarian, and Julia Sushytska (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014); Gil Morejón, "Differentiation and Distinction: On the Problem of Individuation from Scotus to Deleuze." Deleuze and Guattari Studies 12, no.3 (2018): 353–73; Henning Teschke, "What is Difference? Deleuze and Saint Thomas." Verbum VI, no.2 (2004): 413–22; Eugene Thacker, After Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 135–50; Nathan Widder, "John Duns Scotus," in Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage, ed. Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 27–43.

15. The object of metaphysics, identified by Scotus, is this very 'transcendental being,' defined by its not being constricted to the categorial division of reality. The fact that Deleuze's speaking of being occurs at such a 'transcendental' level becomes especially apparent if we consider the context in which he elaborates the rudiments of his unique ontology. This occurs precisely in the act of transcending the Aristotelian categories. He opens the first chapter of Difference and Repetition with a lengthy characterization of the "propitious moment" in the ontology of difference—that is, Aristotle's logical and ontological definitional structure revolving around the notions of highest genera and the contrariety of specific difference. He subsequently roundly criticizes any constriction of ontological thinking to, any distribution of being by, such a schema of categories. In the very next section, he introduces his founding ontological thesis—a statement which characterizes concrete being per se, critically stepping beyond contraction to any given category. He begins by invoking none other than scholasticism's most careful defender of the transcendentality of metaphysics' subject matter: "there has only ever been one ontology," Deleuze says, "that of Duns Scotus." Deleuze conscripts Scotus's transcendentally-common, univocal being, into the service of his subsequent, uniquely heretical ontological proposition. He follows this saying that "Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself." The significance of this thesis will become clear, once we have specified more precisely the meaning and history of transcendental unity. For these quotations, see: Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 35–6. For Deleuze's repeated affirmation of being's transcendental univocity, see pages 57, 123, 202, 231, 239, 283. On Scotus' 'transcendental' conception of metaphysics, see: John Duns Scotus, Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle: Volume 1, trans. Girard J. Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1997) I., Prologue, 7: "it is necessary that some general science exists that considers these transcendentals as such", and Ludger Honnefelder, "Metaphysics As a Discipline: From the 'Transcendental Philosophy of the Ancients' to Kant's Notion of Transcendental Philosophy," trans. J. Muller and R.L. Friedman, in The Medieval Heritage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Modal Theory, 1400-1700, ed. R.L. Friedman and L.O. Nielsen (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 53-74.

16. For a brief survey of the relevant literature: Jan Aertsen suggests that "The term 'transcendental' ... suggests a kind of surpassing. What is transcended are the special modes of being that Aristotle called the 'categories', in the sense that the transcendentals are not restricted to one determinate category. 'Being' and its 'concomitant conditions', such as 'one', 'true' and 'good', 'go through (circumeunt) all the categories' (to use an expression of Thomas Aquinas). [The Doctrine of Transcendentals] is thus concerned with those fundamental philosophical concepts which express

universal features of reality" (Jan A. Aertsen, "The Medieval Doctrine of the Transcendentals: The Current State of Research" Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale 33 (1991): 130–47, here p. 130; W. Norris Clarke explains "By transcendental property of being is meant an attribute that can be truly predicated of every real being, precisely insofar as it is a real existent" (The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 60); Oliva Blanchette understands the transcendentia as "common mode(s) that follows every being, and therefore, like being itself, transcends all categories.... they are called transcendental, insofar as they follow the transcendentality of being" (Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics, 149); Joseph Owens explains transcendentality as "a characteristic found in all things throughout as well as beyond the Aristotelian categories.... [a convertible transcendental property] 'will accompany being wherever being is found" (An Elementary Christian Metaphysic (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985), 111, 117); Jorge J.E. Gracia provides the following definition: "X is transcendental if and only if the extension of the term that names X is greater than and includes the combined extensions of the terms that name each and every one of the categories into which being may be divided" ("The Transcendentals in the Middle Ages: An Introduction" Topoi 11, no. 2 (1992): 113–20, here p. 115; John F. Wippel defines transcendentia as "certain characteristics or properties that follow upon being and that are as broad in extension as being itself" (The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 192); Finally, Jean Grondin understands the transcendentia to be "essential predicates of Being.... They transcend all particular genera, following the example of Being" (Introduction to Metaphysics: From Parmenides to Levinas, trans. Lukas Soderstrom (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 105).

17. Aquinas explains this relationship as that of something's flowing forth from the essence, by virtue of what the essence is as such. See: Thomas Aquinas, Opuscula IV : (De ente et essentia p. 315-381), ed. H.-F. Dondaine, based on the previous work of P.J.M. Perrier, Opera Omnia, vol. 43, Leonine Edition (Roma: Editori di San Tommaso, 1976). Chapter VI: "accidentia aliquando ex principiis essentialibus causantur secundum actum perfectum, sicut calor in igne qui semper est calidus" [my translation: "there are some accidents which are caused from out of the essential principles of a being to be in complete actuality, such as heat in fire which is always actually hot"].

18. Where such specifications as 'degree' and 'mode' are present at all, as in the case of finite being. 'To the same degree' in the sense of, if there is some latitude in transcendental being, such that there can be a hierarchy of 'more or less', transcendental properties proportionally match being's degree.

19. See: Aertsen, Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought, 683–84: "Unlike the ratio of the 'true' and the 'good', the ratio of the 'one' has hardly been the subject of controversies. From Philip the Chancellor to Suarez Aristotle's determination of the 'one' as the negation of division has generally been adopted; unum signifies 'undivided being'." In particular, see: Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, trans., John Patrick Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961) IV, L.2, C.548-563, 221–5; Meister Eckhart, Parisian Questions and Prologues, trans. Armand A. Maurer, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1974), 84; John Duns Scotus, Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle: Volume 1, trans. Girard J. Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1997) IV, Q.2, 277-315.; John F. Wippel, The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines, 26: "According to Godfrey, a thing is one or enjoys unity insofar as it is not divided from itself and is divided or distinguished from everything else"; William Ockham, Ockham's theory of Terms: Part 1 of the Summa Logicae, c. 39, 124: "One is a passion of being since it is predicated of being in the second mode of perseity; for although 'being'

signifies what 'one' signifies, it does not signify this in the same way. Whatever 'being' signifies, it signifies positively and affirmatively rather than negatively. 'One', on the other hand, signifies all of the things signified by being in both an affirmative and a negative way." Although it remains a disputed question between Thomists and Scotists whether 'one' is ultimately a negation, only logically distinct from being (Aquinas) or a positive reality, formally distinct from being (Scotus, following up on certain suggestions found in Avicenna) both camps agree that the intension of unum is indivisum.

20. A note on the intension of 'unity' in Aristotle. Aristotle discusses unity in general in two key places. First, in the 'philosophical lexicon' book Δ (Met. Δ.6, 1015b-1017a8), second, in the opening parts of the late book I (Met. I.1-3, 1052a15-1055a3). In both passages Aristotle stresses the equivocity of unity. In practice, this implies – indicating perhaps a decision on aporia 11, the problematic which is "hardest of all", on whether "the one itself" is the essence of things (Met. B.4, 1001a1-25) – requiring that unity itself-in-itself never appears. Rather, what shows up is unity-in-its-own-way— deployed diversely in different contexts of being: "the one, then, in every class is a definite thing, and in no case is just this, unity" (Met. I.2, 1054a10). Such a pros hen equivocity is fitting given the close connection between being and unity which we see Aristotle assert in Δ.2. So, like the discussion of the several senses of being in the succeeding chapter of the 'lexicon' (Met. Δ.7, 1017a8-1017b9; E.2, 1026a33-37), Aristotle in both books I and Δ enumerates a largely similar list of the several ways in which things are said to be 'one'. Something is called 'one' if it is either (a.) continuous (without division into discrete parts in place or time), (b.) formally whole (not definitionally divided), (c.) individual (numerically undivided), or (d.) universal (indivisible in intelligibility). Although 'unity', like being, is really equivocal (both with respect to its four primary senses just outlined and in terms of its deployment in the categories of being), there is certainly a logically univocal core to its notion. In each of the senses above described, the same notion of 'indivision' was operative. Aristotle identifies this, saying that "to be one means to be indivisible" (Met. I.1, 1052b16). But, this logical univocity in no way precludes a real equivocity—a really prior, because simpler expression of this indivisibility. Thus, Aristotle states that "unity in the strictest sense, if we define it according to the meaning of the word, is measure, and most properly of quantity, and secondly of quality" (Met. I.1, 1053b4-5). The meanings of this indivisibility are extended further, so as to 'correspond to the categories one to one' (Met. I.1, 1054a14). The principal instance of unity in the truest sense is the quantitative, as we saw from the passages in Met. I.1. How should we articulate this in terms of the fourfold division from Δ.7? Plainly the two available candidates are (a.) and (c.), the former being an instance of continuous quantity and the latter an instance of discrete quantity. From Aristotle's definition of continuous quantity (Cat. 6, 5a1-15) though, we can see that it directly contradicts the logical definition of unity stated above, as 'indivisibility'. Because the continuous is defined precisely by its thoroughgoing susceptibility to division – by its being in many respects less than fully undivided – it would certainly be strange if the unity which Aristotle believes to be most adequately and fully called unity was exactly infinitely perforated by potentially common boundaries allowing infinite divisibility, and so possessed only in a relative way of the characteristic which Aristotle in the same passage describes as the principal feature of unity. Thus, we should decide against continuous quantity (a.) as the principal kind of unity. Consistent with the division above, this implies that taken in itself, the principal kind of unity is the discrete quantity of the individual 'this' (c.). As we will see, individual unity will have its principle in the formal unity (b.) of the species, constitutively inherent in the individual 'this'. For Aristotle's understanding of unity, and the relationship of being and unity, see Adam Crager, "Three Ones and Aristotle's Metaphysics."

Metaphysics 1, no.1 (2018): 110–34; Stephen Makin, "Aristotle on Unity and Being," Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society 34 (1988): 77-103; Mary Louise Gill, Aristotle on Substance: The Paradox of Unity, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Michael J. Loux, 'Aristotle on the Transcendentals' Phronesis 18, no. 3 (1973): 225–39; Leo Elders. Aristotle's Theory of the One (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1960).

21. Thomas Aquinas, I Sent., d. 8, q., 1 a. 3. Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi, ed. Mandonnet and Moos. 4 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 1: 200: "sed unum addit rationem indivisionis; et propter hoc est propinquissimum ad ens, quia addit tantum negationem" (my translation: "but the one adds [to the notion of being] the aspect of indivision, and therefore it is the closest to being, because it adds only a negation").

22. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae [Ia Pars, qq. 1-49]. Opera Omnia Vol. 4 (Leonine Edition. Romae: Typographia poliglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1888) (I. q. 11, art. 1): "unum no addit supra ens rem aliquam, sed tantum negationem divisionis, unum enim nihil aliud significat quam ens indivisum" (my translation: "one adds no reality to being, but only the negation of division, for one signifies nothing other than undivided being.").

23. For a helpful treatment of sources and nature of the distinction between these two 'ones,' see Sten Ebbesen, 'Tantum Unum Est. 13th-Century Sophismatic Discussions Around the Parmenidean Thesis,' in The Modern Schoolman LXXII (January/March 1995): 189–93.

24. Aquinas, Summa Theologiae Ia. q. 11, art. 2.; See Aertsen, Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas, 201–42.

25. See: Armand Maurer, "Thomists and Thomas Aquinas on the Foundation of Mathematics." Review of Metaphysics 47 (1993): 43-61.

26. Thomas Aquinas, Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei, ed. Spiazzi, Pession, Calcaterra, Centi, Bazzi, Odetto. (Turin: Marietti, 1949), IX., art. 7, ad. 15.; See the English translation: Thomas Aquinas, On the Power of God, trans. by the English Dominican Fathers (Philadelphia: Aeterna Press, 2015), 480. This can be stated in another register in terms of 'difference' between the many-ones and the 'diversity' which makes them many. "Different" Aristotle says in Metaphysics V.10.1018a12–15, "is applied to those things which though other [diverse] are the same in some respect." Aquinas reiterates this definition in his Summa Theologiae Ia., q. 90, art. 1, ad. 3: "quod differens, proprie acceptum, aliquo differt, unde ibi quaeritur differentia, ubi est convenientia. Et propter hoc oportet differentia esse composita quodammodo, cum in aliquo differant, et in aliquo conveniant. Sed secundum hoc, licet omne differens sit diversum, non tamen omne diversum est differens" (my translation: "that which differs, taken properly, differs by something; for which reason we ask after difference where there is sameness. And from this it is proper to say that things which differ must be composite in some way, since they differ by something, and are the same by something. So according to this, though all different things are diverse, still yet all diverse things are not different."). Just as division is prior to quantitative difference (thus defined) inasmuch as the former does not share anything in common, but the latter is in some measure the same and in some measure other, this implies that the ultimate explanation of division a certain primary division must exist as a principle, which is defined by the entire and structural opposition of the terms of the division. This latter primary opposition Aquinas refers to as the original division between 'being' and 'non-being,' or, negation per se. For this derivation of the ultimate formal principle of diversity and difference in Aquinas, see: Thomas Aquinas, Expositio Super Librum Boethii De Trinitate, ed. Bruno Decker (Leiden: Brill, 1955), q. 4, art. 1; On the priority of division/diversity to plurality/difference, see: David Winiewicz, "A Note on Alteritas and Numerical Diversity in St. Thomas Aquinas." Dialogue 16, no.4, (1977): 693–707; John F. Wippel, "Thomas

Aquinas on the Distinction and Derivation of the Many from the One: A Dialectic between Being and Nonbeing." The Review of Metaphysics 38, no.3 (1985): 563–90. And see Wippel's Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas, 65–194.

27. Philip the Chancellor, Philippi Cancellarii Summa de bono, ed. N. Wicki (Berne: Francke, 1985); Jan Aertsen, "The Beginning of the Doctrine of the Transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1230)." Qvodlibetaria: Mediaevalia. Textos e Estudos 7-8 (1995): 269–86.

28. Philip's account of the transcendentals is quite elegant. He uses indivision along the lines of three of the four Aristotelian causes to provide a succinct account of the various other transcendental terms: indivision of the entity intrinsically from itself and extrinsically from its efficient cause is ens, indivision of the entity intrinsically from its formal cause is verum, indivision of the entity intrinsically from its final cause is bonum.

29. John Marenbon provides a brief but quite suggestive summary of the historical influences prefiguring the first formulation of the doctrine of the transcendentals in his Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction, 226: "With Augustine and Boethius in the background, some hints from Aristotle's Metaphysics, and some help from William of Auxerre's discussion of goodness, Philip the Chancellor is the first person to formulate these thoughts into a theory of 'transcendentals'. He picks out four properties which all things have: being, goodness, unity and truth." Etienne Gilson's reading of early 13th century theology in his History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages also supports this list of historical influences (250–74).

30. Hans Joachim Krämer, Plato and the Foundations of Metaphysics, ed. and trans. John R. Catan (New York: SUNY Press, 1990), 86: "Plato is revealed as the precursor of the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals."

31. Plotinus says in the Enneads that "All beings are beings due to unity, both those beings that are primarily Beings and those that are said to be among beings in any way. For what could be, if it were not a unity? For if you take away the unity which they are said to be, then they are not those things. For an army does not exist unless it is a unity, nor a choir, or a heard, if it is not a unity. Nor a house or a ship, if it does not have unity, since a house or a ship is a unity, and if it loses its unity, then it is no longer a house or a ship." Proclus, in the Elements of Theology similarly argues that the One is the undeclined primus, the "first cause of all existing things, whence they severally proceed as branches from a root, some near to it and others more remote." Damascius echoes this conclusion in his Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles, saying "The One is the principle of all things... it is the summit of those things that subsist in terms of a hierarchy," and "all things are after the One, for the One is not isolated, but after it follow plurality and difference." The Pseudo-Dionysius says that everything is "differentiated and pluralized only insofar as it goes forth from the One... As they (the many) move a little away from it (the One) they are differentiated a little, and as they fall farther they are farther differentiated. That is, the closer they are to the center point, the more they are at one with it and one with each other, and the more they travel away from it the more they are separated from each other." See: Plotinus, Enneads, ed. and trans. Lloyd P. Gerson, trans. George Boys-Stones, John M. Dillon, R.A.H. King, Andrew Smith, James Wilberding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), VI.9.1.1-8., p. 882; Proclus, The Elements of Theology, trans. E.R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), Prop. 11, 13.; Damascius, Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles. Trans. Sara Ahbel-Rappe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1.II.22., 105, and 2.III.28., 121; Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names," in The Complete Works, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (Paulist Press. 1987), 821A, 99–100.

32. Proclus, Commentary on Plato's Parmenides, trans. Glenn R. Marrow and John M. Dillon

(Princeton: Princeton University Press 1987), 74: "it is necessary" he says, "that the first principles are many, without participation in any unity whatsoever, or that they are one without plurality, or that they are many participating in unity, or that they are one containing a plurality in itself."

33. Proclus, The Elements of Theology, Proposition 1.

34. Iamblichus, The Theology of Arithmetic: On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers, trans. Robin Waterfield (Newburyport: Red Wheel/Weiser, 1988) 41–7.

35. Iamblichus. The Theology of Arithmetic pp. 42.

36. Plotinus, Enneads, II.4.11-16., III.6,6-19.

37. Proclus, On the Theology of Plato, I.7: "The Parmenides, therefore, enkindles in the lovers of Plato, the whole and perfect light of the theological science." See also: Eric R. Dodds, "The Parmenides of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic 'One'." The Classical Quarterly 22, no. 3-4 (1928): 129–42; John M. Rist, "The Neoplatonic One and Plato's Parmenides," in Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, vol. 9 (Johns Hopkins University Press, American Philological Association, 1962), 389: "As long ago as 1928 Professor E.R. Dodds demonstrated the dependence of the One of Plotinus on an interpretation of the first hypothesis of the Parmenides. His demonstration has been universally accepted."; Gilles Deleuze, Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza, 172 "(T)he first hypothesis of the Parmenides dominates all Neoplatonism."

38. Plato, Parmenides, In Complete Works, ed. Johnathan M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1997), 165e.

39. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 39, and later (304) he says that univocal being "is said 'in all manners' in a single and same sense, but is said thereby of that which differs, is said of difference... Univocity signifies that being itself is univocal, while that of which it is said is equivocal: precisely the opposite of analogy." See John Milbank's critical retort to this latter quotation in "The Soul of Reciprocity Part Two: Reciprocity Granted." Modern Theology 17 (2001): 485–507: "Of course, precisely not. Analogy speaks analogously of the analogical and so truly does escape dialectic. Whereas, if one says that the equivocal univocally is, then a dialectic after all ensues: being is also equivocal, differences are a veil for the same sameness." See alternatively: Miguel de Beistegui, Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 241: "The science of being qua being is no longer a science of identity and analogy, but of difference and univocity. Being is the ens commune only and precisely to the extent that it coincides with the movement of difference itself."

40. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 234: "...since it is already difference in itself and comprises inequality as such, intensity affirms difference. It makes difference an object of affirmation."

41. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 57.

42. See: John Duns Scotus, Opus oxoniense. I., d. 2, q. 3, in Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings, trans. Allan Wolter (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), 83-95. On the 'theological' dimension of Deleuze's divergence, see note 100 of this essay.

43. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 57, 120, 222, 256

44. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 120–1: "The important thing is not that the difference be small or large, and ultimately always small in relation to a greater resemblance. The important thing, for the in-itself, is that the difference, whether small or large, be internal." And 28: "difference 'between' two things is only empirical, and the corresponding determinations are only extrinsic."

45. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 117.

46. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 222. There is an immediate question as to how Deleuze

avoids the absurdities of an infinite regress. This is a complex issue that I believe has the principle of its resolution in his often-overlooked erasure of the distinction between ontological ground/ consequence (see: 244, 274–6). Without prior/posterior, the notion of a series breaks down. In its place, we have the logically and ontologically simultaneous affirmation of difference in its pure state, without complication with identity or unity. This is I think closer to Deleuze's aim, and, although other aspects of Deleuze's thought might lead to insuperable difficulties, it is at least not the case that infinite regression can be used as a counter.

47. On Deleuze's relationship to this strand of the Platonic tradition, see: Roland Faber, "The Infinite Movement of Evanescence: The Pythagorean Puzzle in Deleuze, Whitehead, and Plato." American Journal of Theology & Philosophy 21, no. 2 (2000): 171–99.

48. In what follows, I am drawing upon a previous article of mine, in which I associated Deleuze's idea of difference with Scotus's earlier invention of 'ultimate difference.' See: Lucas Buchanan Carroll, "Deleuze Among the Scotists: Difference-In-Itself and Ultima Differentia." Deleuze and Guattari Studies 16, no. 3 (2022): 331–78.

49. John Duns Scotus, Opera Omnia Vol. III. (p. 1, q. 3, n. 131-137), ed. C. Balic, M. Bodewig, S. Buselic, P. Capkun-Delic, B. Hechich, I. Juric, B. Korosak, L. Modric, I. Montalverne, S. Nanni, B. Pergamo, F. Prezioso, I. Reinhold, and O. Schäfer. (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1954); passages from Ordinatio 1.3 I will henceforth cite in their English translation, which can be found in: John Duns Scotus, On Being and Cognition: Ordinatio 1.3, trans. John van der Bercken (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

50. The debate between Thomists and Scotists on the nature of univocity and analogy continued until the end of the Middle Ages. A particularly lucid presentation of the scope of this debate can be found in the late scholastic Juan Poinsot, otherwise known as John of St. Thomas (1589-1644), who expressed the opposition between these camps in terms of: one, the clarity versus the ambiguity of the notion of being, and two, the exclusion versus the inclusion of differences within the scope of 'being.' The Scotistic proponents of univocal being contended, on logical and epistemological grounds, that 'being' (as 'first known' or as the primum cogitum) is apprehended clearly, exclusively in and as its conceptual opposition to non-being. This clear and abstract notion of being is, in its simple formality, per se exclusive of all finite differences. Differentiation, which is evident in concreta, must then be accounted for through an additional, primarily diverse formal principle (the ultima differentia). By contrast, the Thomistic proponents of analogous being contended that the ens primum cogitum is not an abstract, clear, and simple concept, but rather is incipiently discovered in a 'confused' (con-fusio) way along with its concrete differences, only ever in the context of the composition/division of judgement (rather than in simple apprehension or logical analysis). See: Juan Poinsot, The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas, trans. Yves R. Simon, John J. Glanville, and G. Donald Hollenhorst (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 195: "Being is included in the modes or differences that contract it; in other words, it is predicated of these modes or differences, and if it is a complete being, it includes them. Consequently, it does not constitute a concept enjoying absolute unity: it implies inequality and diversity inasmuch as it is included in its own differences." – On the debate between Thomists and Scotists concerning this point, see the context offered in: Brian Kemple, Brian, Ens Primum Cogitum in Thomas Aquinas and the Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 20–88. For an excellent reconstruction of analogy's contention that 'being' is co-discovered along with its intrinsic differences, see: Blanchette, The Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics, 115–44.

51. There is an excellent recent book studying Scotus's account of ultimate difference. See: Andrew T. LaZella, The Singular Voice of Being: John Duns Scotus and Ultimate Difference (New York:

Fordham University Press, 2019).

52. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 119–20. See also: Gavin Rae, Ontology in Heidegger and Deleuze (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 133: "the lowest, primordial form of difference.... does not depend upon anything else for its differentiation."

53. John Duns Scotus, On Being and Cognition: Ordinatio 1.3, trans. John van der Bercken (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), p. 1, q. 3, n. 132.

54. Scotus, On Being and Cognition: Ordinatio 1.3. p. 1, q. 3, n. 133, 161; Etienne Gilson, Jean Duns Scot: Introduction a ses positions fundamentals (Paris: Librarie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1952), 95; Allan B. Wolter, The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1946), 90–8. On this being a hidden form of analogy, see: Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, The Analogy of Names, and The Concept of Being, trans. Edward Bushinski and Henry J. Koren (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 15–21. James F Ross, Portraying Analogy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 123: "denominative classification is not, by itself, analogy. Rather, differentiated same-word denominations are analogous.... to call Smith a runner and his teammate Jones a runner is not to differentiate 'runner.' But, to call something 'human' because it is constitutively human, i.e. a person, and to call clothes 'human' because they are human dress is denominatively to differentiate 'human', making each analogous (denominatively) to the other."

55. On this history, see my "Deleuze Among the Scotists", 359–67, where I go over the dialectic of these figures and Deleuze's relation to them in detail. See also: Aertsen, Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought, 414–7; Stephen D. Dumont, "The Univocity of the Concept of Being in The Fourteenth Century: I. John Duns Scotus and William of Alnwick." Mediaeval Studies 49 (1987): 1–75; Dumont, "The Univocity of the Concept of Being in The Fourteenth Century: II. The De ente of Peter Thomae." Mediaeval Studies 50 (1988): 186–256; Antonius Andreas, In quatuor Sententiarum Libros opus lounge absolutissimum (Venice, 1578). I. d. 3 q. 3, n. 11, fol. 19; Christian Schabel, "Peter of Candia," in A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 506–7.

56. Carroll, "Deleuze Among the Scotists": 331–78.

57. Scotus, John Duns. On Being and Cognition: Ordinatio 1.3, trans. John van der Bercken (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), p. 1, q. 3, n. 132; For a more detailed treatment of the failure of Scotus's reductio argument against the predicability of univocal being of ultima differentia, see my "Deleuze Among the Scotists", 365-367.

58. See: Alain Badiou, Deleuze: The Clamor of Being, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Badiou speaks of "a shared conviction as to what it is possible to demand of philosophy tpday and the central problem that it must deal with: namely, an immanent conceptualization of the multiple" (4). Later, he famously charges Deleuze with being a covert philosopher of the one: "Deleuze's fundamental problem is most certainly not to liberate the multiple but to submit thinking to a renewed concept of the One." (11). There are problems with Badiou's reading, as many Deleuzian scholars have amply demonstrated. We can contribute in some respect to this debate by showing how Deleuze actually goes further than Badiou, in rejecting the ontological place of unity. For Deleuzian responses to Badiou's criticism, see in particular: Clayton Crockett, Deleuze Beyond Badiou: Ontology, Multiplicity, and Event (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

59. Deleuze, Gilles. Difference and Repetition. p. 29.; Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, trans. Brian Massumi (Minnesota University Press, 1987), 20–5; Alain Badiou, Being and Event, trans. Oliver Feltham (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 25–74.

60. Badiou, Being and Event, 25–33

61. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 182.

62. Adrian Johnston, A Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism Volume One: The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), xv.

63. Badiou, Alain. Deleuze: The Clamor of Being, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 20.

64. Aquinas, Thomas. I Sent., d. 19, q. 4, a. 1, ad (Mandonnet ed., 1: p. 481): "unum sit quod est indivisum in se et divisum ab aliis" (my translation). This establishes a close link, for Aquinas, between two transcendental properties which he distinguishes in De Veritate q. 1, art. 1. That is, here he sets up a link between unum (one) and aliquid (something: aliud + quid ["another what"]). The unum speaks indivision in itself, the aliquid speaks division, and more broadly, relation, to all else. On the importance of the aliquid to the metaphysics of Aquinas, see: Philipp Rosemann, Omne ens est aliquid : introduction à la lecture du "système" philosophique de saint Thomas d'Aquin. (Louvain: Editions Peeters, 1996), 49: "These considerations lead us to a quite astonishing conclusion: in the world as we know it, all being is only something relative to other beings which are not itself. All being is only something by relation to other beings from which it distinguishes itself. Or, again and more clearly: all being is only something in not being something other. Here is the first principle and, in a sense, the sole principle of the Thomistic metaphysic. If at one time it is understood, all the rest follows." (my translation).

65. Oliva Blanchette, The Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics, 157–71; W. Norris Clarke, The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 60-71; Georges P. Klubertanz, Introduction to The Philosophy of Being (Des Moines: Meredith Publishing Company, 1963), 220–2; Charles A Hart, Thomistic Metaphysics: An Enquiry into the Act of Existing (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1959), 332–41.

66. One can hear the influence of Sartre in Deleuze's critique of the ontological negative. Negation has no place within the plenary affirmation that is being-in-itself. It is instead a sign of the involvement of being-for-itself. For Deleuze on the negative in being. see: Difference and Repetition, xx, 33, 50–1, 106, 170, 235, 302; Miguel de Beistegui, Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 265. On the exclusion of 'the negative' from affirmative existence in Sartre, see: Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 36–44, 56–85; and Nausea, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing. 2013), 127: "And then all of a sudden, there it was, clear as day: existence had suddenly unveiled itself. It had lost the harmless look of an abstract category: it was the very paste of things, this root was kneaded into existence. Or rather the root, the park gates, the bench, the sparse grass, all that had vanished: the diversity of things, their individuality, were only an appearance, a veneer. The veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, all in disorder—naked, in a frightful, obscene nakedness."

67. Making implicit reference to Hegel's image of metaphysics as "the diamond net" in which the world is intelligized, Deleuze says that, on the contrary, thinking being in terms of limitation and opposition allows the "largest fish to swim through." See G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Nature: Volume II, trans. A.V. Miller, ed. MJ Petry (New York: Routledge, 2014), §246Z; Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 68

68. The way Deleuze sets up this apparent divide captures, in many ways, the intuition that certain modern Thomists have explained in great detail. John Wippel explicitly argues that the only consistent way to deny Parmenidean monism is to adopt the doctrine of analogy. He

contends that a metaphysics which would do justice to plurality must acquiesce to a proportional/ proportionate dispensation of being, and must do so because pluralization supposes essentia as a receptive principle or "relative non-being," standing in opposition relationship to being (esse). Without such an intrinsic ontological principle of 'the negative,' and the corresponding articulation of analogy, Wippel's argument goes, the only available alternative is a complete denial of concrete multiplicity—that is, he argues, the denial of the negative and analogy results logically in the affirmation of Parmenidean monism. It is an astounding fact, which speaks to the depth and concretion of Deleuze's thought, that he could see in advance an entire line of reasoning so central to modern Thomism. Deleuze describes its essential logic with powerful concision in the very context of leaping past the apparent dichotomy, towards an entirely different ontology inassimilable to either of Wippel's – or Aquinas's – considered alternatives. See: Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 63, 268--9; John F. Wippel, The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 533–64; Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas on the Distinction and Derivation of the Many from the One: A Dialectic between Being and Nonbeing." The Review of Metaphysics 38, no. 3 (1985): 563–90. I discuss these aspects of Aquinas in "Deleuze Among the Scotists: Difference-In-Itself and Ultima Differentia", 342–3.

69. In a later memorable phrase, he will propose the ontology of the "and…and…and." See: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1987), 20-25.

70   Thomas Aquinas, Quaestiones disputatae De malo. Opera Omnia Vol. 23, ed. P.-M. Gils (Roma: Editori di San Tommaso, 1982) q. 2, a. 1, ad. 9: "omnis negatio fundatur in aliqua affirmatione" (my translation).

71. Thomas Aquinas, I Sent., d. 25, q. 1, a. 4 (Mandonnet, ed., 1: 612): "res dicitur quasi aliquid ratum et firmum in natura" (my translation). Oliva Blanchette also uses this phraseology to good effect in his Philosophy of Being, 99–102.

72. Thomas Aquinas, Thomas, Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle (Volume I), trans. John P. Rowan (Henry Regnery Company, 1961), IV. lect. 2, n. 553, 223: "the term "thing" is applied from the quiddity only; the term 'a being' is applied from the act of being; and the term 'one' from order or undividedness. But it is the same thing that has essence, and that is undivided in itself. Hence these three, thing, a being, one, signify entirely the same reality, but according to different aspects."

73. Aristotle, Metaphysics   .2 1003b23-35

74. A particularly helpful treatment of formal causality in conversation with contemporary metaphysics can be found in: Edward Feser, Scholastic Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction (Editiones Scholasticae, 2014): 160-210. Outside of the scholastic tradition, and indeed as an important figure in Deleuze's own philosophical lineage, see on the point of an intrinsic structuring "theme" or "form" which comprises the "vertical unity" of a system: Raymond Ruyer, The Genesis of Living Forms, trans. Jon Roffe and Nicholas B. De Weydenthal (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), 19, 41.

75. Thomas Aquinas. Quaestiones disputatae de veritate. Opera Omnia Vol. 22., ed. A. Dondaine (Roma: Editori di San Tommaso, 1970-1976) q. 21, art. 5, ad. 8: "essentia rei est una per seipsam, non propter esse suum" (my translation: "the essence of a thing is one through itself, not on account of its existence").

76. A classic treatment of being through form/essence in the Middle Ages can be found in Gilson, L'être et l'essence, 46-77. See also his Being and Some Philosophers: 2nd Edition (Toronto: Pontifical

Institute of Medieval Studies, 2014), 41–107.

77. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 275: "the matter-form couplet is not sufficient to describe the mechanism of determinations." Gilbert Simondon critiqued the matter-form couplet in detail, in his Individuation in Light of the Notions of Form and Information, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 21–54; Alfred North Whitehead likewise attacked the primacy of form within the real process of determination, or 'concrescence.' See his Process and Reality: Corrected Edition, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978), 20: "Each fact is more than its forms, and each form 'participates' through the world of facts. The definiteness of fact is due to forms; but the individual fact is a creature, and creativity is the ultimate behind all forms, inexplicable by forms, and conditioned by its creatures."; For an overview of the Deleuze/Whitehead connection, see Steven Shaviro, "Transcendental Empiricism in Deleuze and Whitehead," in Secrets of Becoming: Negotiating Whitehead, Deleuze, and Butler, ed. Roland Faber and Andrea M. Stephenson (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 82–91.

78. For Deleuze on individuation, see: Difference and Repetition, 12, 25, 38, 229, 246–7, 268--9, 299–304.; Simondon's perspective is particularly important and interesting for Deleuze's critical approach to transcendental unity. See: Gilbert Simondon, Individuation in Light of the Notions of Form and Information, 4 "In order to think individuation, we must consider being not as substance or matter or form, but as a tense, supersaturated system above the level of unity, as not merely consisting in itself, and as unable to be thought adequately by means of the principle of excluded middle; the concrete being or complete being, i.e. pre-individual being, is a being that is more than unity"; For the Deleuze/Simondon connection, see: Alberto Toscano, The Theatre of Production: Philosophy and Individuation between Kant and Deleuze (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Filippo Del Lucchese, "Monstrous Individuations: Deleuze, Simondon, and Relational Ontology." Differences 20, no. 2–3, (2009): 179–93.; Iliadis, Andrew. 'A New Individuation: Deleuze's Simondon Connection." MediaTropes 4, no. 1, (2013) 83–100.; Emmanuel Alloa and Judith Michalet, "Differences in Becoming: Gilbert Simondon and Gilles Deleuze on Individuation." Philosophy Today 61, no. 3 (2017): 475–502; Morejón, "Differentiation and Distinction", 353–73.

79. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 235

80. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 250: "It is the individual which is above the species, and precedes the species in principle."

81. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 254: "The indivisibility of the indivisible pertains solely to the property of intensive quantities not to divide without changing their nature", 247: "The individual is neither a quality nor an extension. Individuation is neither a qualification nor a partition, neither a specification nor an organization. The individual is not an infima species, any more than it is composed of parts. Qualitative or extensive interpretations of individuation remain incapable of providing reasons why a quality ceases to be general, or why a synthesis of extensity begins here and finishes there."

82. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 246

83. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 238, 117: "the in-itself of difference hides itself"

84. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 173

85. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 121

86. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 250: "The question is not whether in fact the individual can be separated from its species and its parts. It cannot. However, does not this very 'inseparability', along with the speed of appearance of the species and its parts, testify to the primacy in principle

of individuation over differentiation?"

87. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 246

88. Or, what amounts to the same thing, by excising the res from its presupposed constriction by the unum—thus dissolving the unitas per se ipsam of that which is the object of pure affirmation. A critical description of the 'materialist' ontological position which affirms the 'pure res' independent of a synthetic relation with formal unity (which would be, is it suggested, simply the assertion of materia prima as being itself) has been offered by the speculative Thomist Ferdinand Ulrich in his Homo Abyssus. See 188–96.; On Deleuze's non-essentialist account of real determination, see: Bruce Baugh, "Real Essences without Essentialism," in Deleuze and Philosophy, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 31–42.

89. Aquinas says this many places, see his: Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle 12.1; Aquinas, Thomas. Liber de veritate catholicae Fidei contra errores infidelium seu Summa contra Gentiles. Edited by P. Marc, C. Pera, and P. Caramello. Taurini-Romae: Marietti, 1961. II., c. 55; De potentia, 3.1.12; Summa Theologiae Ia. q. 45, art. 4; De Veritate q. 27, art. 3, ad. 9. For a very interesting reading of the notion of 'subsistence' as the proper name for ens in Aquinas, see: Schindler, D.C. 'The Word as the Center of Man's Onto-Dramatic Task.' Communio 46, Spring 2019. pp. 73-85.

90. Aquinas, De Veritate. q. 2, art. 2, ad. 2 "reditio ad essentiam suam in libro de causis nihil aliud dicitur nisi subsistentia rei in seipsa. Formae enim in se non subsistentes, sunt super aliud effusae et nullatenus ad seipsas collectae; sed formae in se subsistentes ita ad res alias effunduntur, eas perficiendo, vel eis influendo, quod in seipsis per se manent" (my translation).

91. Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles III, c. 113: "Omnis enim res propter suam operationem esse videtur: operatio enim est ultima perfectio rei." ("For it appears that all things exist for the sake of their operation, for operation is a thing's ultimate perfection" my translation).; De potentia q. 1, art. 2: "unumquodque enim tantum abundat in virtute agendi quantum est in actu." ("For just inasmuch as something exists in act, to the same degree does is abound in power to act" my translation).

92. Aquinas, Summa Theologiae Ia., q .5, art. 1, ad. 1.

93. This passage is particularly important in the reconstruction of Aquinas's metaphysics accomplished in Ferdinand Ulrich's Homo Abyssus. See pp. 50, 162-172, 233, 372, 398-400. It is important to note, as well, that Aquinas uses this definition of subsistence as the measure for the hierarchy of beings. See: Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles. IV, c. 11: "secundum diversitatem naturarum diversus emanationis modus invenitur in rebus: et quanto aliqua natura est altior, tanto id quod ex ea emanat, magis ei est intimum." (my translation: "according to the diversity of natures, we find in things different modes of emanation: and that from a higher nature, all of that which emanates from out of it, is [yet] more intimate to it").

94. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 23–4, 283

95. Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 57: "Repetition is the formless being of all differences, the formless power of the ground which carries every object to that extreme 'form' in which its representation comes undone. The ultimate element of repetition is the disparate, which stands opposed to the identity of representation. Thus, the circle of eternal return, difference and repetition (which undoes that of the identical and the contradictory) is a torturous circle in which Sameness is said only of that which differs." For Deleuze on the eternal recurrence, see his Nietzsche and Philosophy, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); and see: Charles Olney, "A New Metaphysics: Eternal Recurrence and the Univocity of Difference." The Journal of Speculative Philosophy 34, no.2 (2020): 179-200.

96. This makes up the first and second repetitions, a first repetition of the same (the phenomenal present) and a second repetition of the different (the phenomenal present grounded in the pure past which is never present). Deleuze is explicit though that the highest or 'ontological' repetition is a third, which is the repetition of the difference between first and second repetition (a universal ungrounding in which both phenomenal present and pure past are swallowed up, in the pure determination of beings without identity: the reign of simulacra). Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 67, 91, 202, 292–3

97. Deleuze, Gilles. Difference and Repetition, 243: "It is because nothing is equal, because everything bathes in its difference, its dissimilarity and its inequality, even with itself, that everything returns—or rather, everything does not return." And 299: "Only affirmation returns—in other words, the Different, the Dissimilar."

98. Deleuze's early study of Hume is here particularly apparent. Further, although they differ on many points metaphysically, this particular implication of Deleuze's metaphysic is can be thought as strikingly consonant with a central idea of Meillassoux's, inasmuch as both Deleuze and he deny any ontological ground which might support the necessity of identifiable causal sequences. See: Quentin Meillassoux, After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency, trans. Ray Brassier (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), 91.

99. This is part of a description of the young Deleuze by his friend, Michel Tournier, in Deleuze and Religion, ed. Mary Bryden (New York: Routledge University Press, 2001), 201.

100. An assumption that was itself expressed in a veiled form in the Middle Ages, in a particularly crucial way where the topic of the demonstration of the existence of God was concerned. As the result of innumerable arguments rendering for their conclusion the proposition that the fullness of being itself exists, there was always added on in addition to this within the monotheistic tradition the further inference that this unlimited expression of being or existence itself is, precisely on this account, therefore singular and simple, and so susceptible of being named 'God.' Deleuze's disruption of the notion of transcendental unity interrupts this exact inference, by refusing to permit the movement of transcendental convertibility from the highest affirmation of being per se to the theologically-necessary properties of unity, simplicity, etc. In the absence of the convertibility of being and unity, one could suggest, the reasoning which results in the affirmation of a dimension of necessary existence is underdetermined in its further inference that this is to be identified with a single unified being, or, the monotheistic God, as opposed to instead being an unqualified affirmation of Deleuze's being-without-one. To indicate something of this rich classical tradition of identifying God with pure being, which I am suggesting relies implicitly upon the thesis of transcendental unity, I here simply note a few particularly representative sources in chronological order: Avicenna argued in his Metaphysics that "the reality of the First exists for the First, not [any] other. This is because the One, insofar as He is the Necessary Existent, is what He is in terms of Himself, namely, His essence." And also, "necessity does not have existence as a second thing that it needs." God is defined simply as this unlimited affirmation of being. In Meister Eckhart's speculative commentary on Exodus, he explains that God is "pure naked existence... unmixed" and that precisely for this reason, self-sufficiency "is proper to God alone. In everything that is beneath God, the essence is not self-sufficient to and in all things." Such primordial self-sufficiency which is existential identity is the source of the necessity by which God exists. "Existence itself needs nothing because it lacks nothing.... Just as he exists for himself and for all things, so too is he sufficient for himself and for them all; he is his own and everything's sufficiency." Similarly in his 28th Metaphysical Disputation, Francisco Suarez argues that the following descriptions of the Divine Being are really equivalent and only logically distinct:

"infinite being", "that which has being by itself", "that which is simply necessary", "being (which) is by essence", "uncreated being", and "being which is entirely actual/pure act". And in the 31st he carries this thought on even more explicitly: "it (infinite being) is and subsists of itself with every perfection of essendi; and, in this sense, it is rightly said to be proper to God that He be subsistent being itself." To be unlimited actuality or existence by essence itself is to be a singular uncreated, self-sufficient, and unqualifiedly necessary being. This is confirmed by Mulla Sadrā, when in his Metaphysical Penetrations he defines God, the Necessary Being by saying that: "its essence is existent by itself without having need of any instaurer that would bestow existence upon it, nor a receptacle that would receive it." This essence is wujūd (existence) itself, and not merely by containing existentiality as an analytical part, but instead through being itself nothing but "the sheer reality of wujūd, with which nothing other than wujūd is mixed, neither limit nor end afflicts this reality". This is again an identification of God with the very subsistence of wujūd in its untrammeled purity and intensity. Finally, Leibniz also defines the Necessary Being, or, God, in terms of identity with its own existence. "Existence does not differ from essence in God, or, what is the same thing, it is essential for God to exist. Whence God is a necessary being." And in The Monadology he elaborates "God alone (or the necessary being) has this privilege, that he must exist if he is possible" and this because the necessary being is that being which "has the reason of its existence in itself." We can see from each of these examples that the identity of God is discerned as simply being identical to the being itself, which conclusion relies as an unarticulated assumption that unity is a transcendental property of being itself. Avicenna, The Metaphysics of The Healing, trans. Michael E. Marmura. (Provo: Brigham Young University, 2005), 278, 282.; Meister Eckhart, "Commentary on Exodus" in Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher, trans. Bernard McGinn (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986), 45–8; Francisco Suarez, The Metaphysical Demonstration of the Existence of God: Metaphysical Disputations 28-29, trans. John P. Doyle (St. Augustine's Press, 2004), 2-15.; Suarez, On the Essence of Finite Being as Such and On the Existence of that Essence and Their Distinction, trans. Norman J. Wells (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1983), 221; Sadrā, Mulla. The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations. Translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Ibrahim Kalin. Brigham Young University Press, 2014. pp. 22, 73.; Leibniz, G.W. Philosophical Essays, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 28, 218.

101. There have been some who have taken up this challenge which Deleuze leaves to contemporary metaphysics, who have overtly advocated difference as a first 'ontic principle' (which, given what we have said above, we can simply express as the claim that difference is being's primary transcendental property). See: Levi R. Bryant, "The Ontic Principle: Outline of an Object-Oriented Ontology," in The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism. Edited by Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman (Melbourne: re.press, 2011), 261–78.

102. Some attempt has been made to consider the possibility of transcendental disagreements. See: Giorgio Lando and Guiseppe Spolaore, "Transcendental Disagreement." The Monist 97, no. 4 (2014) 592–620. But, this line of research has not moved far beyond merely sketching a logical and semantic schema by which debates concerning 'transcendentals' (this term though, in the essay cited, remaining an extremely weak version of what historically has been called 'transcendental,' which we have traced here) can simply be represented. But this falls quite short of what we are suggesting is needed: that is, the elaboration of contentual criteria by which robustly transcendental disputation can be engaged in and decided upon.

103. Which 'conceptual creation' is said by Deleuze to be the singular and proper task of philosophical practice. See: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. What is Philosophy? trans. Hugh

Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (Columbia University Press, 1994).

104. In the confrontation with Aquinas we've already sketched, several transcendental properties have already been problematized in the context of Deleuze's diverging from the unum—the aliquid in the context of unity's relation to limitation/divisio, the res, in the context of unity's relation to the unitas per se ipsam intrinsic to essentia, and the bonum, in the context of unity's relation to secondary actuality, or the reditio that is constituent of being's goodness as constituted by the factors of mode, species, and order (see: Aquinas, Thomas. Summa Theologiae. Ia. q. 5, art. 5, respondeo). – I suspect that the singular point around which Deleuze's divergence will be most acutely perceived, and which will be the most likely ground upon which this entire transcendental disagreement will be arranged, will be on the field of the disputed status of transcendental truth (verum). This is because the verum logically requires the unum. Aquinas argues this in De Veritate (q. 21, art. 3, resp.), saying that "verum autem praesupponit unum, cum veri ratio ex apprehensione intellectus perficiatur; unumquodque autem intelligibile est in quantum est unum; qui enim non intelligit unum, nihil intelligit" (my translation: "for truth presupposes unity, since the sense of truth is perfected by the apprehension of the intellect; but, whatsoever is intelligible is so inasmuch as it is one, because whoever fails to comprehend unity, comprehends nothing at all."). The accompanying claim to transcendental truth (verum), or, the position that concrete being is per se intelligible and open to inspection by finite spirit, thus has its foundation in the convertibility of being and unity. On the basis of what we have shown here, then, we can directly cast Deleuze a critic of yet another transcendental property: the verum. Whereas the classical tradition (we might suggest) proceeds by denying being-without-one in denying entitative unintelligibility, Deleuze (we might suggest) proceeds by affirming being-without-one and the non-adequation of being and thinking (see Difference and Repetition, 139). Although we cannot here enter into this in any detail – or show how it intersects with Deleuze's critique of the postulate of knowledge as terminus of the classical image of thought (Difference and Repetition, 167) – it is enough, for the time being, to simply indicate the path from the displacement of the transcendental unum to the disruption of the transcendental verum. – For contemporary supporting claims as to the intrinsic connection of unum and verum according to classical metaphysics – and for general recent treatments on transcendental systematics – see: Bernard Lonergan, Insight: The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan Volume 3, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 543: "We have been exploring the traditional metaphysical theme of being and unity. The middle term of our comparison has been intelligibility, for intelligibility is intrinsic to being, and at the same time it is the essence of unity."; William Desmond, Being and the Between (New York: SUNY Press, 1995), 492; Lorenz Puntel, Structure and Being: A Theoretical Framework for Systematic Philosophy, trans. Puntel and Alan White (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 440.

105. Polemics against medieval transcendental thought usually abstract from the debates themselves, and attempt – instead of such an intensive metaphysical engagement – to castigate at an epistemological level the apparent error or confusion at the root of the formation of transcendental predicates. Such examples can be found in both Kant and Spinoza's arguments against the classical transcendental properties. What is unique about Deleuze's transcendental engagement is that he actually enters the ontological fray itself with a viable alternative. It is in this respect that his approach is both polemical to the classical tradition as well as being richly contentual. For classic 'epistemological' critiques, see: Baruch Spinoza, Ethics Part II, Proposition 40, Scholium 1 (266–67), in Spinoza: The Complete Works, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002); Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman

Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965) B113–6, 118–9.

106. On the influence of medieval philosophy's commitment to transcendental verum as the metaphysical background of, for instance, Descartes' Meditations, see: Martin Heidegger, Introduction to Phenomenological Research, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 120–47. On the continuing influence of the transcendental bonum in the form of the multiply-ramified project of theodicy which substantially informed the entire history of modern philosophy, see Susan Neiman, Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

107. King-Ho Leung, "The one, the true, the good… or not: Badiou, Agamben, and atheistic transcendentality." Continental Philosophy Review 54 (2021): 75–94; Jean-Luc Nancy, The Birth to Presence, trans. Brian Holmes et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 36–7.