

ON RADICAL ORTHODOXY'S CRITIQUE OF THE UNIVOCITY OF BEING

Hyuk-Been Joshua Kwon*

I embarked on this paper with the question whether current theological discourse is faithful to its task of defending the ontological relation of reciprocity between God and creatures, which governs every relation in reality. Common to our reflection on this contemporary world is that we are facing the daily increasing gravity of our ecological crisis and divided relationship with one another, all of which, I think, are based on the widening of the existing gap between creatures and the Creator. It would seem that, by allowing the autonomous existence of spheres apart from God, various kinds of dualism have appeared in and deeply permeated theology as well as other academic disciplines since the late medieval period and with the emergence of modernity.

Today, such dualistic paradigms are called into question by many thinkers, and the present inquiry raises questions connected with the doctrine of creation by arguing that the errors of such modes of dualistic secularism could possibly be overcome by a certain kind of Christian perspective. If a philosophy of separation has enabled us to control nature and to speak about God from a distance, then only a more participative and mediating paradigm will enable us to heal such a divide and reconnect ourselves with nature, others, and God. Hence, the need to make the notion of participation available to our own day is more urgent now than ever, especially in the face of growing tendency of our culture to dispense with any integrating vision of reality.

This tendency to separate shares close ties with modernity. For modern philosophers have uncritically used the tools of the scientific method resulting in the correspondence theory of truth based on the

*Dr. Hyuk-Been Kwon is Full-time Lecturer in Christian Philosophy and Systematic Theology at Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology. He received a Ph.D. from Cambridge University, an M.A. in Systematic Theology from the University of Birmingham, an M.Div from Presbyterian College & Theological Seminary in Korea, and a B.A. from Hanyang University .

autonomous self. The self, estranged from others, nature and God, was placed at the centre of natural knowledge that governed the modern technological society. In other words, the vision of modernity was not framed by a theological perspective, but postulated a sphere independent of God from which it emerged, formulating the worldview of modernity, that is, secularism. The shift from the territory of modernity to the terrain of postmodernity has grave implications for those who seek to reshape the world with a theology of God-centred vision. It is the vision that the modern concept of the world in isolation has to be brought back into the relational and participatory context wherein God forms and nourishes it. So we, people in a postmodern context, must think through the ramifications of the changes occurring during the period of modernity, or the late medieval period, for our understanding of our world and the role of Christian theology as well.

Here, what provokes my interest is situated in the vision of Radical Orthodoxy¹ (henceforth, RO), a recent theological movement arising from Cambridge, England. As the central framework of its theological project, the metaphysics of participation has been taken up by RO to accuse secular theology of being based on such dualism. According to them, “(t)he central theological framework of radical orthodoxy is ‘participation’ as developed by Plato and reworked by Christianity, because any alternative configuration perforce reserves a territory independent of God.”²

¹RO is a new theological movement initiated by some Cambridge (or former-Cambridge) theologians, representatively, John Milbank, Graham Ward and Catherine Pickstock, among others, calling their theology a new Christian theology. With a participative and incarnate view of mediations, which is in line with the Neoplatonic concern, it seeks to bridge the gap between reason and faith, philosophy and theology, time and eternity, Being and beings and so on. Reformulating a powerful Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy, it criticizes self-enclosed and self-founding secular discourses, that is, secular philosophies that attempt to ground thought and reality on a secular or immanent foundation (modernism), and if not, reject all notions of grounding and remaining in the periphery of appearances (postmodernism). In other words, at the heart of RO's claim is the premise that modernity and all of its systems of truth based on universal reason have ended in the postmodern recognition that all thought is situated in specific cultural and linguistic systems. Theology can therefore reclaim its own voice by retrieving the traditional Christian insight, especially of Augustine and Aquinas, that all created beings are related to God and so to one another in terms of being.

²John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, ed., *Radical Orthodoxy*:

Perhaps it is fair to say that the entire theological enterprise of RO can be epitomised on the basis of the notion of participation, the way of the postmodern retrieval of Christian Neoplatonism. The re-emergence of the metaphysics of participation in RO is interesting. For it signifies a return to patristic and medieval roots in the project of recovering some long-lost notions that can provide us in the contemporary world (wherein a-theology is expanding the zone outside God) with a theological perspective that brings back divine illumination for all discourses.

Paul Ricoeur remarks that the causality of the creation of God “establishes between beings and God the bond of participation that makes the relation by analogy ontologically possible.”³ This statement is true, but it needs to be carefully qualified especially when associating ‘participation’ with ‘analogy’ or vice versa. For as we have seen above it is inaccurate to say that to uphold the univocal thesis always means the wholesale denial of analogy or the causality of creation. A good example would be the debate concerning the interpretation of Scotus’ univocity. In my view, Richard Cross is not entirely wrong when he argues that Scotus’ theory of univocity does not discount the analogy of being. For though the terms “analogy” and “participation” are no doubt fundamentally related to each other, as we shall see, they are not exactly identified: the approval of one does not inevitably satisfy all conditions for the other. In other words, the doctrine of analogy can stand on its own feet without fully satisfying all the demands of participation. This will become clear from a re-examination of two extreme positions concerning the interpretation of Scotus’ univocity.

RO claims that the Scotistic univocity of being has eliminated analogy as a result of its lost sense of participation. However, Cross argues that in Scotus the univocity of being entails a metaphysical analogy as well as participation. He claims that since Scotus thinks univocity is a pre-condition of analogy, univocity also satisfies the conditions for the indeterminate character of analogy by way of the variable intensities. Scotus’ univocity of being, continues Cross, is no more than a semantic theory and Scotus tells us nothing different from

A New Theology (London: Routledge, 1999), 3.

³Paul Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. R. Czerny, K. McLaughlin and J. Costello (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 276.

Aquinas concerning the relation of imitation, viz. the analogy that exists between God and creatures. On this score, Cross remarks that "Scotus' theory is as apophatic as Aquinas's,"⁴ arguing that his theory "is wholly consistent with the view that creatures somehow participate in divine attributes,"⁵ even though the term 'participation' never appears in Scotus' writings.

As I have noted above, the realness of common natures and the univocity of being offer something tenable that helps explain a certain kind of unity between God and creatures. Nevertheless, on the basis of Scotus' denial of the distinction between *esse* and essence, the mere external resemblance seems to be something uneasily associated with a proper sense of the metaphysics of participation. It certainly offers a different view regarding the concept of being. In Scotus' mind, the relationship of imitation between God and creatures is not something actually performed but merely "mind-imposed." Cross naively understands participation as simply meaning that "all creaturely goodness imitates the *per se* goodness of God"⁶ with no further ontological concerns. Moreover, Scotus' emphasis on the conceptualised and abstracted *esse* can hardly play a role in accounting for the diversity of things. In other words, in the course of his denial of the real distinction, Scotus spontaneously disrupts the sense of participation in which the multiplicity of creatures can only be explained in connection with the self-distance of *esse* rather than by the limiting principle of essence.

Interestingly, however, similar criticism can be directed against the claim of RO that Scotus' univocal thesis was used for eradicating the doctrine of analogy as well as the metaphysics of participation. As RO rightly points out, it is true that, in effect, Scotus' innovation as regards the univocity of being changed the concept of metaphysics by eliminating the sense of participation. However, RO takes the extreme position that univocal being is never attuned to the doctrine of analogy. As a matter of fact, Scotus neither attempted to abandon the analogical way of knowing God, nor did he think that analogy was incompatible with univocity.⁷ What he denied was the peculiar version of analogy

⁴Cross, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *op. cit.*, 14.

⁵*Ibid.*, 19

⁶*Ibid.*, 19, n. 40.

⁷See *Ord.*, I, 8, 1, 3, 83.

upheld by Henry of Ghent, which underscored more positive knowledge of the divine nature and attributes while maintaining a different version of analogy from that of Aquinas. Most importantly, contra Aquinas, Henry regarded *esse commune*, which was quasi-generic for Aquinas, as referring to the divine being in its proper sense and brought it to the fore.⁸

RO's critique of Scotus' univocity of being seems to be two-sided: on the one hand, the univocal theory makes God and the creature excessively contiguous and, on the other hand, it also makes the distance of the two realms overly far-off. It is true that in the scheme of the univocal theory, the infinite God and finite creatures come to be under the same concept so that the difference between them is merely one of degree. This is indeed a clashing point on which Aquinas and Scotus can never be reconciled. By saying this, however, Scotus did not mean that God is simply the biggest tree. That is to say, God and creatures are totally different kinds of being, but can be placed in the same concept only when being is made to be abstracted facet of things. RO writers seem to ignore the point that the univocity of being in Scotus presupposes a certain aspect of analogy. Scotus argues that in order to sustain the existence of God we must have some concept of God, which must be positive rather than negative. In other words, the infinite concept of being gained from finite being can be called God, and it is all that we need in order to prove the existence of God. In his view, it is impossible to know or prove the existence of God unless being is univocal, and only on that condition can the finite be related to the infinite such that both God and creatures are predicated as not non-being. Hence, Scotus arrives at the conclusion that if there are finite beings, there is God. In other words, the possibility of any finite being is ultimately based on the existence of God.

Pickstock, a leading RO writer, is convinced that the difference of degree does not allow any specific likeness between God and creatures, thus ruling out any possibility of analogical proximity. According to her, the Scotist univocity paradoxically entails equivocality between God and creatures, not analogy in any sense, spontaneously divorcing creatures from each other. She writes,

⁸For Henry's understanding of analogy and its difference from that of Aquinas, see Dumont, *op. cit.*, 204-207.

Thus, the univocity of Being between God and creature paradoxically give rise to a kind of equivocity, for the difference of degree or amount of Being disallows any specific resemblance between them, and excludes the possibility of figural or analogical determinations of God that give us any degree of substantive knowledge of His character. . . in the same way that univocity of Being paradoxically distances the creature from God, it also distances creatures from each other, and each creature from itself.⁹

Pickstock accuses Scotus of contending that being is situated only in its external resemblance by which any positive relation between God and creatures was abandoned. However, in my view, this accusation would be more appropriate to his followers who developed the univocal thesis in the grand project of nominalism, rather than Scotus himself who still held the realness of common nature, allowing some kind of ontological relation. For example, we must be careful to distinguish between Scotus and Ockham. Though Ockham accepts the Scotistic univocity of being, for him the univocal being shared by God and creatures is nothing but a name. According to him, there is no such thing shared between entities. In such a way, Ockham seeks to eliminate the doctrine of analogy by considering it as a separate mode of predication, whereas Scotus retains it as something annexed to univocity. According to Ockham, any common term predicable of individuals will always be shown to be either univocal or equivocal depending on how it is used.

I am not saying that the Scotistic univocity has no responsibility for the demise of participation or that it is not inimical to analogy. One cannot deny that the implications of his univocity of being overflows into what we call onto-theology, as defined by Heidegger. But when we read him without associating him with his predecessors and followers, Scotus' position could appear to be more elusive, hovering halfway between the characteristics of both negative and natural theology.

Coner Cunningham, a RO author, also confuses Scotus' position with that of Ockham in claiming that in Scotus' scheme of univocity, "each object loses its ontological unity, a unity only partially regained by practical representation."¹⁰ His understanding of Scotus' being is as

⁹*After Writing, op. cit.*, 123.

¹⁰Conor Cunningham, *Genealogy of Nihilism: Philosophies of Nothing and the Difference of Theology* (London/New York: Routledge, 2002), 21.

something which mediates each reality through a common nature but only as 'a logical sameness of being'. Despite Scotus' abstraction of being, his concept of being has a certain relation with the common nature real to both God and creatures, which is a certain kind of real unity, as earlier noted. Such unity was not rejected by Scotus; rather, it was exaggerated.

By the same token, the argument of Phillip Blond, another RO writer, appears to need some corrections:

The outcome of the univocal thesis of Scotus was a twofold abandonment and scission of the inter-relation of God and creation. The univocal thesis allowed the world to abandon God, as one could now wholly dispense with God by explaining the world in terms of this higher ground whatever it might be. This thesis also led to God abandoning the world, since the assumption that both God and his creatures share in some prior term meant that God could assert himself as God only by claiming to have a greater degree of this prior quality and hence, from the perspective of man, a greater power. This situation made God like man (even though God has an infinite share of this univocal being whereas man takes only a finite proportion) since both God and man were forced to share in the same immanent being in order to be at all.¹¹

Here Blond postulates Scotus' theory of the relation between God and creatures as totally unrelated, which, again, stems from his failure to notice the difference between Scotus and Ockham. No doubt Scotus would be quite offended by Blond's claim. Scotus in fact remarks that creatures are really related to God, though he also said that God is not really related to them in a certain sense.¹² Moreover, Blond misunderstands Scotus insofar as he accuses Scotus of regarding God and creatures as the same kind of being in different degrees. Yet, it should be said that they are different kinds of being that are the same in terms of their existential status.

Moreover, there remain a few words concerning Suarez in whom we find little sense of participation. Bringing both Ockham and Scotus together, however, Suarez has left the door open to the principle of analogy in admitting that conceptual being (*ens rationis*) falls under metaphysics only indirectly and by analogy with real being. Suarez is

¹¹Phillip Blond, "Perception" in *Radical Orthodoxy*, *op. cit.*, 233.

¹²See *Ord.*, I, 30, 2, 49-51.

fully aware of the fact that the univocal concept of being cannot be purely abstract.

All this is to show that the metaphysics of participation should not be perfectly identified with the doctrine of analogy. As noted earlier, it is hard to deny that the univocity of being itself does not completely rule out the doctrine of analogy, at least for some writers. To be precise, the Scotist univocity of being does not fully eliminate analogical content but embraces it insofar as it allows for a certain kind of ontological unity. However, it was unfortunately used and advanced by Ockham and some of his nominalist followers to fissure the relation of God and creatures. Alexander Broadie describes the relation of analogy with univocity as a starting-point: "the doctrine of analogy is not necessarily in conflict with that grand project of natural theology. Insofar as analogy presupposes univocity, analogy is not inimical to the project but can on the contrary be used as a starting-point for it."¹³

Moreover, what I have found is that in some cases some proponents of the doctrine of analogy do not fully appreciate the metaphysics of participation. It would therefore be fair to say that the univocity of being does not constitute a magic wand, the waving of which is sufficient to clear up all outstanding aspects of analogy; rather it damages the basic elements the metaphysics of participation. In my view, failure to notice this is due to the absence of a lucid classification of epistemology and the actual communication of *esse*, a term widely confused in the writings of many medieval writers. RO's accusation that the univocity of being plays a significant role in weakening the relation of God and creatures is surely plausible. For them, "without any distinction in being between the infinite God and finite creation, created beings have nothing by which to gain their bearings in relation to God."¹⁴ However, their interpretations of some proponents of the univocal theory will need some further refinements, which may help

¹³ Alexander Broadie, "Duns Scotus and William Ockham" in *The Medieval Theologians*, *op. cit.*, 263.

¹⁴ John Montag, "The False Legacy of Suarez" in *Radical Orthodoxy*, 51. See also Pickstock's article, *Modernity and Scholasticism*, p.6 where she says that "...as regards the pure logical essence of *esse*, there is univocity between all its instances; while as regards ultimate differentiating qualitative properties there is equivocal diversity; thus, although *esse* is univocal *in quid*, in the fully determined quiddative instance there is always something existentially present that is over and above pure univocity, and appears indeed to be entirely 'different'."

them avoid becoming entangled in unnecessary debates.

CONCLUSION

The development of the univocal theory occurred in the context of the aftermath of the Condemnation of 1277, wherein the individual was conceived in terms of plural forms. On this score, the concept of being was largely considered as a concept empty, neutral and abstracted from reality. The univocity of being, as we have seen, weakened the ontological basis of the relation between creatures and God, leaning towards the metaphysical deduction of being and its conditions. In making this move, essence absorbed being and being became merely an intrinsic mode of essence in the denial of the real distinction. In other words, the essence-existence couplet was reduced to essence as specific nature and the individual. However, in misunderstanding the real distinction as situated in a *duae res*, as Giles erroneously put it in order to explain the distinction in a more effective way, those who subscribe to univocity consider themselves as saving a conceptual identity between *esse* and essence by reducing a *res* to a *nihil*. The consequence of this was the identity between an actual essence and its actual existence, which in turn means that the neutralised existence is reduced to nothing. Cunningham rightly states that “[i]t is really because being, taken in mainly conceptual terms as univocal, does not concern itself more with existence than with non-existence, that it does not concern itself more with God than with creatures, and is thereby unable truly to think their difference.”¹⁵

Indeed, in contrast to Aquinas, according to whom *esse* forms the central feature of his theology,¹⁶ those who upheld the necessity of univocal concepts were more preoccupied with essence.¹⁷ Their conceptual grasp of being resulted in the lost sense of *esse* as the *actus*

¹⁵Conor Cunningham, *op. cit.*, xv.

¹⁶John D. Caputo accuses Aquinas of focusing on the being (*ens*) rather than Being itself so that, as he sees it, Aquinas’ primacy of *esse* over essence lies within the framework of *ens*. Such understanding is too facile: it simply discounts the primary application of the term ‘*esse*’ to God in Aquinas. See John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 131.

¹⁷Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham: In the Light of Its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 278.

essendi and the fullness of being, and it naturally disregarded the role of *esse* in explaining the multiplicity of reality. This difference is not without significance, for, as has been repeatedly stressed, all the issues surrounding the metaphysics of participation are primarily dependent upon different ideas of *esse*. In dealing with such issues, interestingly enough, Scotus, Ockham and Suarez did not come to grips with Aquinas, showing no awareness of the authentic meaning of *esse* in Aquinas. They instead regarded Henry of Ghent as the main defender of the doctrine of analogy, and Giles of Rome as the defender of the real distinction between *esse* and essence. Despite such energetic debates surrounding the concept of *esse*, ironically, the concept became restricted strictly to emptiness.

The tradition in which being is or has a reality in its own right, espoused among the *Thomistae* and others, was profoundly destabilized by the univocal theory initiated by Scotus. His inauguration of univocal being was the epistemological foundation for natural knowledge of the divine nature, for according to him rationality requires the univocal as the same ground on which both God and creatures stand. In other words, with his theory of univocity, Scotus certainly contributed to the inauguration of the theory that the mind is simply a capacity to know some of the divine nature without any innate ideas or divine illumination.

Such understanding of reality in terms of the univocal concept of being was much intensified by Ockham's nominalism, which was firmly wedded to the empirical insight that only individuals exist in his uncompromising rejection of common natures or forms. Whereas for Scotus a formality is something to individuate the individuals, in Ockham's mind nothing causes the individuality of the individual, for every entity is individual by virtue of itself, not by addition of any individuating principle different from their common nature either really, formally, or just by reason. Ockham's theory of the universal was broadly welcomed in his day and one can hardly deny that his philosophy laid the foundation for the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, which became the centre of attention in the modern world.

In acceptance of the univocal theory, Suarez agrees with Ockham's nominalism by arguing that an individual is something more than the common nature not in reality but only conceptually. In fact, as was with Ockham, the term, 'common nature' is something conceived abstractly

and universally in the thought of Suarez.¹⁸ Such conceptual notions provided Suarez with a more positive foundation for the knowledge of God, putting a greater emphasis upon reason than faith.¹⁹ In Suarez, reason and faith do not cooperate; he merely uses philosophical method to take account of theological matters. Indeed, Suarez's intense emphasis on metaphysics broke the close links between theology and philosophy, which set him apart from his medieval predecessors, but also led him to be called the first modern philosopher. In fact Suarez's thought as well as the works of his contemporaries were highly valued among early modern philosophers and provided a great deal of ground for the philosophical journey throughout modernity.²⁰ In particular, Suarez's *Metaphysical Disputations* had

¹⁸ *DM*, 5. 1. 1: "communem naturam seu quae a nobis abstracte et universe concipitur."

¹⁹ While theological authorities were largely ignored, the problem of faith versus reason was developed since the period of Suarez. This problem arose within the discussions of the nature of philosophy, whether it allows room for faith or not. Within this context, Suarez is highly concerned about distinguishing theology and philosophy avoiding arguments based on faith. John Montag describes the role of philosophy in relation to theology in Suarez: "because metaphysics further serves as the proper foundation of theology for Suarez. . . Whereas Aquinas sees 'theology which pertains to holy teaching' founded on principles separate from philosophy to sort out the difficulties of discourse (for what else is there to use?), Suarez sees theology itself as standing on the structure provided by philosophy, specially on ontologically univocal metaphysics. In order to speak well about God, one must begin with the clear foundation provided not by *sacra doctrina*, but the metaphysical structure of Being, which rises up to meet what is revealed." John Montag, "The False Legacy of Suarez" in *Radical Orthodoxy*, 53.

²⁰ It is true that Suarez was the real figure by which most of modern thinkers were deviating from those of Aquinas and many other medieval theologians. For studies on the influence of Scholasticism on modern philosophy, see E. Gilson, *Index scolastico-cartésien* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1913), and *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1930); A. Koyre, *Descartes und die Scholastik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971); Joseph von Hertling, "Descartes Beziehungen zur Scholastik," *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1897 and 1899); J. Freudenthal, "Spinoza und die Scholastik," *Philosophische Aufsätze Zeller zum 50. jähr. Doktorjubiläum gewidmet* (1887); W. Koppers, *J. Locke und die Scholastik*. Inaugural-Dissertation (Berlin, 1895); P. Pendzig, *Pierre Gassendis Metaphysik und ihr Verhältnis zur scholastischen Philosophie* (New York: B. Franklin, 1969); R. von Nostiz-Rieneck, S.J., "Leibniz und die Scholastik," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft*, vol. 7 (1895), 54-67; J. Jasper, *Leibniz und die Scholastik, eine historische-kritische Abhandlung* (Munster i.W., 1898-

profound influence on the metaphysical and theological trend of the modern period, figuring in the works of most popular modern thinkers such as Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz.²¹

Even though Scotus, Ockham and Suarez have been allegedly credited with upholding the univocity thesis, they do not fully agree with one another in details. For that reason, with the three distinct essential aspects of participation, I have tried to access each of their positions, drawing a clear line of division to avoid uninformed criticism. While taking note that they have undermined some essential aspects of participation in different ways, we have arrived at the conclusion that none of them are at home in the sphere of participation. It seems quite true, as Aertsen points out, that univocity is hardly compatible with participation.²² In addition, we have also found the thesis of analogy significant enough in connection with participation but at the same time it is determinable without necessarily entailing a doctrine of participation.

Now, it is certain that the demise of the metaphysics of participation is largely rooted in the emergence of univocal being. However, the question with which this inquiry must leave us is whether Scotus' univocal theory itself simply went too far down a road to the destruction of analogy, or whether it is the later scholars who are more responsible for it. One can say that the metaphysics of participation declined in proportion as the thesis of the univocity of being was accepted. Yet this proposition must be qualified to the extent that some

99); Fritz Rintelen, "Leibnizens Beziehungen zur Scholastik," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 16 Bd. Neue Folge, IX (1903), 157-188, 307-333, and so on.

²¹Especially, the impact Suarez's understanding of Aquinas had on the theological landscape of modern philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Wolff was significant. In addition, Suarez was truly an exceptionally important stature in the Catholic tradition, and also his influence on key figures in the participation of Protestant Orthodoxy in Germany and in the Republic of the Seven United Provinces is never overlooked. See, for example, K. Eschweiler, "Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts" in *Spanische Forschungen des Görresgesellschaft* 1(1928), 251-325, 302, 311; C. Giacon, *La seconda scolastica*, vol. I: *I grandi commentatori di San Tommaso* (Milano: Fratelli Bocca, 1944), 7. For Suarez's influence on Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Berkeley; J. Ferrater Mora, "Suarez and modern participation," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953): 528-547; J. P. Donnelly, "Calvinist Thomism," *Viator* 7 (1976): 441-44, 452.

²²Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 384.

other debates and controversies such as the unicity of substantial forms, the real distinction between *esse* and essence, the problem of the individual, and their historical background, all played their part together with the univocity of being. Hence, it would be more accurate to say that the explanation of the demise of participation is to be found in the explanation of how and why it was that the theory of univocity was adopted and utilised in the phases of the development of logic in the late medieval epoch, rather than on the univocal theory itself. In this regard, the most important weakness in RO theologians who condemn outright the univocal theory of being lies in their inattention to the differences among versions of the theory. They tended to treat Scotus, Ockham and Suarez as upholding the univocal thesis in the same manner, overlooking the distinct ways in which they approach univocity. This oversight has allowed them to treat the analogy of being as something that can in no way be compatible with the univocity of being. I suggest that further discussion on this issue should be left until we treat more thoroughly the concept of being itself in various late medieval writers with an extended theoretical and historical analysis. Failure to do so would only add to our confusion.