

Abstract

Questions of Being and The Question of Being

There are many questions of being, as many as there are different kinds of being and different kinds of science to study these different kinds of being. But, contrary to Heidegger's idea of a twofold question of being, one of being as being and one of the being of being (*das Sein des Seienden*), there is only one question of being as a whole, or of what Lorenz calls the dimension of being found in all the different kinds of being, or of what I would call the act of being in composition with the many essential differences of being in the universe we experience. This unique and single question systematically opens up into a plurality of questions by reason of the analogy of the being that is in question, an analogy that comes into view, not as a generic abstraction from particular differences before they are studied in the particular sciences, as is frequently supposed in the modern conception of ontology, but rather as a concrete order of different degrees of perfection leading up to the human being as the primary analogate of being, as was supposed in the ancient tradition of metaphysics up to Aquinas, where the question of being as being, or of being as a whole, but not of beings, was raised last, at the end of philosophy and science, and not before any of the particular sciences, let alone before logic or epistemology or philosophy of science. The question opens up further by reason of the transcendental properties of being as being that must be distinguished from one another as well as from being, but that are all equally convertible with being in the analogy of its degrees of perfection. Only from such systematic questioning, open to the full intelligibility and goodness of being as being, do we come to a proper account of finite beings in their ontological structure and in the communication that ties them together as universe, as well as from the concept of a first and most universal cause of beings as being or of being as an ordered whole in its diversity of species and in its plurality of individuals in the diverse species, centered on the community of rationally self-conscious individuals and cultures in the historical order of the universe.