

Otherwise than Identity, or Beyond Difference

Maximus the Confessor and the Hypostatic- Transfiguration of Fundamental Ontology

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ABSTRACT This paper locates in the philosophy of Maximus the Confessor a remarkable concern for the temporality, finitude, and historicity of the human soul, that at once anticipates Heidegger's "fundamental ontology," but which is also capable of overcoming the limitations of philosophical nihilism. In taking up Heidegger's claim that the recovery of ontology (and philosophy itself) depends upon the understanding of Being always in relation to its self-revelation in the finite and historical reality of human existence, it becomes clear that contemporary philosophical expression requires a "turning away" from the conceptual unity of finite beings and eternal Being, and a movement toward a radically subjective *negativity*. In contrast to his Neoplatonic forebears, Maximus presents a mode of thinking which is capable of surpassing Heideggerian negation, not through a denial of human particularity or finitude, but rather through a transformation of the very categories of Being and non-being themselves through his understanding of divine personhood. For Maximus such personhood is conceived of as transcending both Being and time, and yet without any loss of transcendence comes also to partake fully of both through the mystery of the Incarnation. According to Maximus, this radical event of *be-coming* forever transfigures the sphere of beings, bringing the historical into the transcendent, non-Being into Being, and death into life.

KEYWORDS apophaticism; fundamental ontology; Heidegger, Martin; theological anthropology

What does it mean to evaluate Maximus the Confessor as a philosopher? Indeed, the remarkable breadth and originality of Maximus's thought is undeniable. The Maximian corpus, though explicitly *theological*, is particularly striking for its richly philosophical density. Drawing freely upon the Neo-Platonic intellectual inheritance of late antiquity, Maximus is no-

table for assimilating (as well as transforming) this inheritance through his reception of orthodox Christology. This originality has been remarked upon by von Balthasar as possessing, above all, "In [every] dimension, the inner form of a synthesis: not only because of what it deliberately intends and achieves but because of its location at a place and moment between the Patristic era and the Byzantine and Carolingian Middle Ages."¹ Though much can be said about the "place" of Maximus in the development of European philosophy, it is not, however, the aim of this paper to provide an examination of Maximus's philosophical influences, nor is it intended to give an exhaustive reading of Maximus's soteriology, theological anthropology, or Christology (a task which would be well beyond the scope of this paper altogether). Likewise, it is not intended to address the "inner unity" of the Maximian corpus as a whole, or his overall "project" as such. Instead, my aim is to answer the question of Maximus *as* philosopher by engaging with the consequences of some of Maximus's particular claims for contemporary discussions in European philosophy.

Specifically, my interest is to bring Maximus into dialogue with philosophy's recent "theological turn," represented by the contributions of thinkers such as Jean-Luc Marion, Jacques Derrida, and Richard Kearney. Broadly conceived, this "turn" has sought to retrieve a theological discourse capable of confronting the modern challenge which Nietzsche named the "death of God," and which Heidegger considered to be the end-result of European metaphysics' essentially "onto-theological" structure. Thus, the theological "turn" in contemporary philosophy seeks to move away from a theological discourse grounded in classical metaphysics and to move toward a renewed "apophaticism," emphasizing the "particularity" of sacred "experience" (conceived primarily in the mode phenomenology). It is vital that, in attempting to approach Maximus's relevance for European philosophy, that contemporary discussions regarding the relationship between theology and philosophy (and the very nature of religious discourse itself) receive consideration.

As such, this paper is framed by a sustained analysis of Heidegger's critique of theological language, as well as an outline of the phenomenological approach proposed by Heidegger as an alternative to traditional ontology. It is necessary to engage the philosophy of Heidegger, for it is Heidegger (perhaps more than any other figure) to whom the phenomenological "turn" to theology has sought to respond. It is only in the words of

1. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Brian E. Daley, A Communion Book (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 29.

Heidegger that the full breadth of Nietzsche's proclamation is understood and carried out. Heidegger's philosophy uncovers, for us most directly, an innate violence within Greek metaphysical discourse, as it always seeks to incorporate within itself a transcendent and "ultimate" horizon of intelligibility, even in so far as it wishes to take hold of and conceptualize the Divine. As Yannaras notes in his classic text, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite*: "As early as the ninth-century Carolingian Renaissance, but especially with the radical distortion of the Aristotelian epistemology of scholasticism, European metaphysics has been built upon . . . the presupposition of God as a conceptual necessity, secured by demonstrative argument, and thus preparing for its own rational refutation."² According to both Heidegger and Yannaras, the displacement of God from the discourse of European philosophy is not therefore, a revolt against the established truths of medieval metaphysics, but is the other side of a double-edged sword first forged in the earliest period of Latin scholasticism.

Though Heidegger's response to this philosophical problem ultimately lapses into a form of nihilism, my engagement with Maximus is intended to locate an anticipation of crucial elements of Heidegger's philosophy within Maximian theology by examining the central importance of temporality, relation, finitude, and historicity in Maximus's *Ambigua ad Iohannem*. In particular, my analysis is directed almost exclusively to the manner in which these ideas appear in *Ambiguum* 7 and *Ambiguum* 10, respectively. Furthermore, it is not only my intention to uncover in Maximus an anticipation of Heidegger's critique of ontology but to also locate an alternative to Heidegger's nihilism in Maximus's deeply Trinitarian (and incarnational) theology of apophaticism. Since it is not my concern to examine the doctrinal sources of Maximus's claims, my focus on such a narrow body of text is instead intended to provide a testimony of his approach to the nature of the human person's relation to God, specifically as interpreted over and against the philosophy of Heidegger.³

2. Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite*, trans. Haralambos Ventis (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 22.

3. Though recent figures of significance have brought the Greek Patristic tradition into dialogue with Post-Heideggerian developments in continental philosophy (Christos Yannaras, John Panteleimon Manoussakis, and Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon, most notable among them), I do not intend to adopt a comprehensive approach or to offer a wholesale critique of such developments. Rather than proposing my own anthropological solution to arising tensions between Heidegger and the Greek fathers in general, I wish to comment on Maximus specifically (and exclusively), through the lens of Heidegger.

According to Heidegger, the displacement of God in philosophy is the result of the traditional understanding of essence as *substance*, mediated by the structure of self-identity. Such a mediation posits Being as a merely transcendent category or universal. This, in effect, obscures what he takes to be the central question of metaphysics: *the question of the meaning of Being*. As he observes in the Introduction to *Being and Time*, “Basic concepts determine the way in which we get an understanding beforehand of the area of subject-matter underlying all the objects a science takes as its theme, and all positive investigation is guided by this understanding.”⁴ The conceptual groundwork of our consideration of Being attempts to grasp the relation between self-identity and the world by supposing a false unity that categorically assumes “Being” as its own foundation. As philosophy takes upon itself the mediation of Being, it must also account for the manifold of difference between beings and their belonging to Being. For all beings to be revealed in their unity through a synthetic “belonging,” Being must be given a generative ground by which the difference is overcome. Philosophy achieves this aim by forcing God to serve as that unifying principle, a “between” that bridges identity and difference.⁵ This misapprehension of Being, and of God as identical with Being, Heidegger later referred to as the “onto-theological” constitution of Western metaphysics.

The question of the meaning of Being must be recovered for Heidegger by dislodging Being from the onto-theological preoccupation with causality and the search for “substances,” and taken up anew in pre-conceptual immediacy. What is signified by the name *fundamental ontology* is precisely this: an analysis of Being in the immediacy of the particular, rather than the universal. It is the analysis of the *particular* being, for whom Being itself is an intimate concern. This being, *the human being*, whom Heidegger calls *Dasein* (literally, being-there) is concerned with the question of Being, not because it desires to meet the criterion of metaphysical systems, but because of the very way in which *Dasein* comports toward the world, and toward itself. The question of *Being* is the question of my *own*

4. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962), 10 [p. 30 of translation]. Hereafter referred to as *SZ*. All works of Martin Heidegger are cited according to standard editions, with translation pages shown in brackets. In the case of *Being and Time*, these are pages of later German editions of *Sein und Zeit* (mentioned in marginal references in all major editions): Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 11th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967). In all other cases, these are volumes and pages of the *Gesamtausgabe* (abbreviated as *GA*).

5. Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), *GA* 11, 39–40 [29–30].

being—the question of myself (SZ, 13 [33]). In repositioning the question of ontology as a question of particular (or personal) significance, Heidegger transforms the fundamental character of philosophical inquiry, re-constituting it as a hermeneutical (that is, interpretive) examination of the way in which the human person *relates* to its own existence, and to its meaning. The “meaning of Being” is uncovered only relative to its self-revelation within the *finite and historical reality of human existence* itself, as *my own* meaning within the particularity of *my own being*. As Heidegger says,

The question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself. The understanding of oneself that leads *along this way* we call “*existentiell*.” . . . [That] does not require that the ontological structure of existence should be made theoretically transparent. The question about that structure aims at the analysis of what constitutes existence. (SZ, 13 [33])

As such, this requires an understanding of the way in which we find ourselves in the world—both as beings who are “always already” within the world of sensible objects and experiences, but more emphatically as *finite beings, existing and disclosed to ourselves within time*. What is meant by time is not the representational and calculable time of Kantian philosophy, nor the abstract “movement” of Hegel’s dialectic, but is instead the unique “being” of the human being as stretched *ecstatically* between its coming into being (in birth) and the limit of experience’s horizon, *in death*. That is, the disclosure of myself to myself is inextricably related, and necessarily dependent upon, the fact that I am in motion toward an end, toward a horizon of my own limitation. “What characterizes [Dasein] is existence, the ecstatic drive-toward-Being by reason of which it is its own potentiality. It already is what it can-be, hence what it not-yet-is: its end.”⁶ The *meaning of being* is undertaken as the comportment toward my own non-being, and is nothing other than the taking up of my freedom, over and against the limitations of my finite end.

Heidegger’s reframing of philosophy’s ultimate concern, away from the constructions of systematic metaphysics and toward a “fundamental ontology” oriented around an analysis of the human person as conscious subject, has obvious repercussions for any engagement between philosophy and theology. In taking up Heidegger’s critique, it might appear

6. William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, Phaenomenologica 13, 3rd ed. (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1974), 75.

that any discussion of God from the standpoint of philosophical method is (like traditional ontological categories) something which must be bracketed out from the more fundamental question of human finitude. For the danger of a philosophical engagement with theology lies precisely in philosophy's inability to approach religion without collapsing into the "onto-theological" reduction of God to a concept.

Like Heidegger, Maximus likewise centers the discourse of his *Ambiguum* 7 upon the particularity of the human being, not as a predetermined "entity" to be analyzed from the external vantage point of "substance." Rather, he also takes up his own existential description of the human person according to its temporality, its historicity, and the profundity of its longings within the horizon of the world. For Maximus, knowledge of God is inseparable from the ecstatic movement of *becoming like* God, that is, it is an understanding belonging only properly to those who have undergone divinization, having surrendered themselves to the will of God. "From the same source that we have received our being, we should also receive our being moved, like an image that has ascended to its archetype, corresponding to it completely."⁷ As such, God is made manifest within the particularity of the human being, in accord with its comportment toward its being-in-the-world.

For Maximus, to *be* is to have an origin (γένεσις), and by extension to *have a duration*, and a motion (κίνησις). "Everything that has received its being *ex nihilo* is in motion, and nothing that moves has yet come to rest, because its capacity for appetitive movement has not yet come to repose in what it ultimately desires." (AI 7.3; *Difficulties*, 1:77) This comportment toward God within the horizon of Being is at the very same time the recognition of Being's own indivisible relation to its temporality, and as such to its own non-being. For any change reflects always a negation, a passing away into that which is no longer, and a recognition of an *inherent* lack of being as revealed by the presence of desire. To have an origin *ex nihilo* is, in a sense, to be undergirded by this nihility, and to move through and with it, *to undergo change*. As such, it is at the very same time to be implicitly related to its being *brought into Being by an Other which transcends it*.

7. AI 7.12; 1:91 in the translation by Nicholas P. Constas. The translation used here and hereafter is that in his edition of the *Ambigua*: Maximus the Confessor, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers*, edited and translated by Nicholas P. Constas, vol. 1: *Ambigua to Thomas; Ambigua to John* 1–22; vol. 2: *Ambigua to John*, 23–71, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 28–29 (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2014). Hereafter referred to as *Difficulties*.

“The end is that for the sake of which all things exist; it however is for the sake of nothing.”⁸ And nothing that has come into being is perfect in itself, for if it were, it would be devoid of activity, having no want or need of anything, since it owes its origin to nothing outside itself. (*AI* 7.7; *Difficulties*, 1:83)

A Maximian understanding of motion, therefore, always points back toward the “creature-liness” and finitude of the particular being, and toward its having an origin which is precisely other than itself.

The horizon of finite being reveals by negation that which is concealed. The “hidden” God is disclosed in the finite and particular reality of the world, for the world is unintelligible if taken as its own reference point.

The fact of being teaches us theology, for it is through being that we seek the cause of beings and learn from them that such a cause exists, without however learning what this cause is in its own essence, for its reflection is not projected outward into beings on the basis of which we might be able . . . to refer back to it, in the way one infers a cause from its effects. (*AI* 10.36; *Difficulties*, 1:205)

Maximus is exonerated here of any criticisms of “onto-theological” thinking, for God is not a “problem to be solved,” or a concept to be grasped but *is Himself the truth of Being*, taken as the uncanny and splendid apprehension of the world and the subject’s miraculous existence within it. Creation is a living signifier of its Creator, a negation that uncovers and affirms the Divine in the glory of the visible, even as He remains concealed.

The principles of each order of being, or *logoi*, are the paradoxically self-concealing manifestations of God within Being. They are what make each being intelligible to itself, and are at once the constitution of each being, as well as its way of relation toward its proper end. Rather than being mere formal causes or finalities, Maximus understands the *logoi* to be the active and free expression of the Divine will *within* creation. “If God created all things by his will . . . and if it always pious and correct to say . . . that he willingly made each of the things that he made, it follows that God knows being as his own wills, for he willingly brought them into being” (*AI* 7.24; *Difficulties*, 1:109). By coming to know the *logoi* within every being and within our own being, we come to *be more like God*, and thus come to know him, through the manifestation of his will for each created thing. That is, not unlike Heidegger, Maximus understands our

8. Cf. Constas’ note on the sources of this phrase, in *Difficulties*, 1:479n9.

ecstatic comportment toward Being as a hermeneutic (in this case, literally a comportment toward the “word” of every being), as a *reading* of existence. The proper comportment toward our own end, and to our own being is exactly the comportment toward the *logoi* and the presence and abiding will of God within and for every being, as we receive God through his revelation in creation.

In honoring these *logoi* and acting in accordance with them, [we] place [ourselves] wholly in God alone, forming and configuring God alone through [our] entire being, so that by grace [we are] called God. (AI 7.22; *Difficulties*, 1:105)

However, this proper comportment toward the *logoi* of Beings, and our own proper relation toward our own self-disclosure, is not a becoming in the mere sense of Aristotelian *telos*. It is not “naturally” predetermined that this relation to God through the *logoi* will be undergone, or that it is necessitated according to a fixed essence. The undertaking of the human person toward its authentic becoming is rather, according to Maximus (as with Heidegger), undergone in freedom, as a matter of *decision*, in relation of the will toward (and within) its own finite horizon. Divinization, as both the authentic knowledge of God and of one’s own being, is a matter of *possibility*. This possibility is set alongside the possibility of self-delusion and of falling away from the truth. The orientation of the human being toward the *logoi* can be distorted and obstructed by the very fact that it is always already present in the world, falling prey to its own passions and wishing to escape its created-ness. “[He] who abandons his own origin, is irrationally swept away toward nonbeing, . . . enters a condition of unstable deviations, by freely choosing instead to turn in the direction of what is inferior” (AI 7.23; *Difficulties*, 1:107). In this condition, human beings are dispersed, corrupted by the flesh and the deceptive phantasms of the senses. This disobedience of the will is precisely what Maximus calls sin, and is already constituted as the condition of the person on account of his finite and embodied nature, “suffering fearful disorders of soul and body, failing to reach his inerrant and unchanging end” (AI 7.23; *Difficulties*, 1:107). Rather than beholding creation, and one’s own being as the manifestation of the divine will, this mode of existence neglects the *logoi*, for the sake of the superficiality of phenomena.

Every human intellect has digressed and deviated from its natural motion, and now moves amid the passions, sensations, and sense-perceptible things.

... [F]leshly passion ... hangs darkly over the governing faculty of the soul [as a kind] of cloud ... and consequently [such a soul] becomes oblivious of things that are naturally good and turns all of its energy solely into what can be perceived by the senses. (*AI* 10.7; *Difficulties*, 1:159–61)

This condition of dispersal or “self-forgetting” is echoed by Heidegger, in what he calls inauthenticity, or the “covering over” of one’s finitude before Being. As Dasein abandons itself to the forgetfulness of everyday life, the inauthentic consciousness is not aware of its own particularity, for it can be aware of nothing outside of the banality of routine activity, it is adrift from itself, lost within the world. As a result, Dasein neglects its own freedom and its own potentiality for being itself, attempting to escape the *thrownness* of existence. According to Heidegger, we find ourselves thrown into a world of manifold phenomena, aware of ourselves as Beings that have passed through birth into a world that is both unfamiliar and uncanny. We find our particular selves overwhelming, and our being burdensome. As finite beings we are brought to the recognition of our possibilities as limits by the impending drawing near of death as an endpoint. Thus, in our thrownness toward death, we flee from the anxiety of our finitude, and fall away from ourselves, seeking to nullify the existential potentiality of arriving at self-disclosure. “Thrown among beings and immersed in them, [Dasein’s] unique prerogative [for self-disclosure] lies lost in its forgottenness. This is its every-day condition.”⁹

Both Maximus, and Heidegger insist that this this fallen condition must be overcome through a reorientation away from the world and toward the truth. This “re-orienting” is in both cases, undergone by and through a kind of withdrawal. But it is the nature of this reorientation that reveals an insurmountable chasm between the two thinkers, exposing a fundamental opposition. For Heidegger, we are reoriented away from inauthenticity by the experience of *anxiety*, where the self-forgetting normalcy of daily preoccupation is interrupted by an unease that manifests what he refers to as *conscience*. This interruption brings Dasein before itself, and with it, the finite horizon of death. Conscience demands a renewal of self-possession, a taking hold of my own possibilities and a taking up of my freedom. Therefore, it must be said that Being remains irredeemably self-referential for Heidegger. The meaning of Being is nothing more nor less than a coming to myself authentically in relation to death. *The possibility of transcendence* is but my comportment toward freedom, inseparable from its station as a

9. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 48.

becoming within the horizon of Being and non-being. The Heideggerian equivalence of transcendence is thus the absence of *transcendence*, and as such is but a form of nihilism. Even the world itself is secondary to my primordial relationship with death. Life within the world is characterized by Heidegger only as inauthentic, and authenticity is made identical with a forsaking of the world for the sake of death's remembrance. Having recognized the implosion of onto-theology's God in the twilight of European metaphysics, Heidegger's philosophy transforms the "death of God" and in turn, exalts death *as* God.

Yet, Maximus's God is not the dead God of philosophy. Surpassing the distinction of Being and non-being, He transcends direct apprehension through the categories of ontology. "God is absolutely and infinitely beyond all beings. . . . He is beyond their nature . . . and is absolutely unconditioned by any relation to anything whatsoever . . . [beyond] sensible and intelligible objects, as well all [reason, knowledge], time, age, and place" (*AI* 10.58; *Difficulties*, 1:243). To turn away from the "dispersed" and illusory comportment toward the world of sin is to withdraw from the "veil of the flesh" and to be oriented toward God's will within the Being of beings, as manifest in the *logoi*. In opposition to Heidegger, this reorienting toward Being is not a self-referential relation to the limitations of finitude and death. Rather, to be in relation to one's end (and one's beginning) is to stand before Being's own self-effacement. For every being, the truth of itself lies beyond its own constitutive horizon, revealing within the world a mirroring of God. For Maximus the "truth of Being" lies above and outside itself, in my having been given being by God. Desiring this truth requires an "upward" movement of *ascent*, taken *by* the intellect in contemplation, where one effaces the mere appearance of the world, and turns toward the world's origin in God.

It was the genius of the saints to have ordered their souls . . . according to the true and infallible of movement conforming to nature, and in this manner . . . they raised up to the level of intellect, possessing the simple spiritual principles of sensible things; by means of a single, simple, and undivided intention of mind. (*AI* 10.9; *Difficulties*, 1:163)

The created order of Being is a place of passage *through* which we must come to see the true nature and purpose of things willed by God, a movement *through* the material and to the spiritual.

But this ascending movement is not itself the end of Being. The contemplative motion of the soul toward transcendence cannot be taken on

its own. Maximus *is not* articulating a pseudo-gnostic forsaking of the world in the name of “higher knowledge” or even Heideggerian solitude. Maximus understands, in contrast, that the ecstatic ascent of the human toward God must be a movement of reciprocity that occurs inseparably from God’s own ecstatic *descent* into creation. For if God remained *wholly Other*, no authentic relation with him could be established beyond negation, for even the *logoi* of beings would themselves be unintelligible without a relation to an intelligible Logos. Yet, how is this knowledge to be established? How can a likeness be established between a God beyond Being and non-Being, without falling prey to the onto-theological trap? The relationship is established for Maximus by the radical articulation of God in accord with the Christology of the ecumenical councils. God is not understood as an abstract essence but as consubstantial *hypostases*. That is, God *is* interpersonal, a communion of equally Divine persons in one Godhead: as Trinity. The Logos, the second person of the Trinity, is He that brought all things out of non-being into Being, but remains “concealed in His manifestation, being unseen according to nature, and manifested through concealment, assuring those who are wise by nature that he cannot be apprehended” (AI 10.31; *Difficulties*, 1:197). But it is He who comes to be known within Being, by *coming into Being*—without any loss of his transcendent and eternal Divinity.¹⁰ The central event of the Incarnation is at the very center of Maximus’s philosophy, and it is through the Incarnation that the human comportment toward Being is utterly *transfigured*, coming to participate in divinity just as God himself comes to participate in the finite horizon of Being.

The combination of these is established by the constitution of his human nature, that is both “above mankind”—and “after the manner of men,” in a human way, for he was born “according to the law of conception,” and thus the One who is above being came *into being by taking up the being of humans*. (AT 5.4, *Difficulties*, 1:35)

10. Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) observes that for Maximus, “The fact that the *Logos* unites in himself the *logoi* of creation *as a person* and not as a divine *nous* or any similar quality of God, means that it is *through the Incarnation* that the *logoi* are truly united to God. . . . Bridging the gulf of otherness between God and the world through ‘hypostatic union,’ that is, *through* a Person (the Son of the Trinity), and not through nature, requires, philosophically speaking, an ontology which is conceived not on the basis of *what* things are (their nature), but how they are (their ‘way of being’ or hypostasis).” John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. Paul McPartlan (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 23.

That is, the Divine comes to actualize *himself*, as a finite and historical being, becoming a *particular* “being towards death.” According to Maximus, this *be-coming* forever transfigures the sphere of beings, bringing the historical into the transcendent, non-Being into Being, and death into life. Through the contemplation of the *logoi*, and the cultivation of the soul, the human being comes to participate in this transfiguration—reciprocating the downward movement of God into the world, through an ascent from the world into God. So it may be said that the fundamental comportment of mankind toward itself, and toward its horizon, is not ontic but *hypostatic*.

Man as a whole will be divinized, being made God by the grace of God who became man. Man will remain wholly man in soul and body, owing to his nature, but will become wholly God in soul and body, owing to the grace and splendor of the blessed glory of God, which wholly appropriate to him, and beyond which nothing more splendid or sublime can be imagined. (AI 7.26, *Difficulties*, 1:113)

Thus, beyond the metaphysical chasm of identity and difference, which Heidegger can conceive only in the nihilism of death, Maximus uncovers the reality of man deified through the revelation of God made incarnate.

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