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## Henry of Ghent on '*Persona*': *Summa*, Article 53, Question 1

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HENRY OF GHENT ON '*PERSONA*': *SUMMA*, ARTICLE 53, QUESTION 1

by

Jennifer M. Gray

Bachelor of Arts  
University of North Carolina at Asheville, 2008

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Accepted by:

Jeremiah Hackett, Major Professor

Christopher Tollefsen, Committee Member

Leah McClimans, Committee Member

Gordon Wilson, Committee Member

Cheryl L. Addy, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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## DEDICATION

To Dr. Wilson, for introducing me to Henry of Ghent. And to all of my philosophy professors, for guiding me through the wide world of ideas that surrounds him.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University of North Carolina at Asheville, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, and Leuven University Press for the patronage of Henry scholarship that made this research possible. I owe many thanks to the late Roland Teske, who so graciously offered me help with translations and kindly obliged my tedious terminology questions. I offer special thanks to the library staff at the University of South Carolina for their patient and diligent collaboration, to my committee members for their input and guidance over many years and many papers, and to my Godmother, Dr. Mary Frame, whose back porch became one of my favorite classrooms and without whom I would not have survived graduate school. To my parents, my first teachers, for the encouragement and the groceries, I am forever indebted. To the philosophy department at the University of South Carolina, for investing in my education and fostering professionalization in my scholarship, I extend my sincerest appreciation. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my husband, who backpacked across Europe that this project might begin and entertained our children that it might also find its end. And to my mentors in Medieval studies, Professors Gordon Wilson and Jeremiah Hackett, I offer the utmost of humble thanks. They have provided invaluable expertise throughout the development of this

thesis and have aided in its refinement at every juncture. Any good contributed to the discipline through this work is a credit to their good teaching.

## ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I shall defend the thesis that Question 1, Article 53 of his *Summa* represents an unexpected epistemic sensitivity in the teachings of Henry of Ghent. By this, I mean that his discussion of the persons in the Trinity hints at an awareness of certain epistemic consequences or assumptions at play in the metaphysical use of terms like person, substance, universal, and so on. This acknowledgement is unique and original among his contemporaries.

My argument establishes Henry's position in context with the traditions he inherited by demonstrating the ways in which it is related to the problem of individuation, how it is distinct from the positions held by his contemporaries, and why it represents the epistemic shift that scholars like Jorge J.E. Gracia attribute to the University system of the Late 13<sup>th</sup> and Early 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries. I situate Henry's discussion of divine personhood in the context of his teachings on relation to show the difference between his treatment of a purely metaphysical issue and one which he takes to require linguistic and logical considerations. I then offer a careful exegesis and analysis of the text at hand, working through his consideration of the term '*persona*' as it operates in comparison with seven other similar terms. I argue that the epistemic implications of this exercise become an integral part of the framework for the remainder of the article.

Yes, this is a metaphysical account of personhood, insofar as it is an attempt to define the real nature of the subject in question. But, Henry initiates this inquiry by way of asking how the term '*persona*' applies. For example, he considers whether it is a term of first or second intention, whether it applies to the actual individual or the universal concept, and so on. These are epistemic questions. Prior to this study, a discussion of the persons in the Trinity may not have seemed an obvious, or even helpful, place to look for Henry's theory of universals. Yet, here it is. And no one that I know of prior to Henry began this way, or, if they did they did not make this explicit in their metaphysical analyses. That alone is interesting enough to merit the following study.

## PREFACE

Henry of Ghent taught in the Theology Faculty at the University in Paris in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. Now regarded as one of the most significant thinkers of his time, his thought represents the intersection between the two great medieval pillars, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus, and was developed on the cusp of the philosophical boom of the 14<sup>th</sup> century that gave rise to the Renaissance.<sup>1</sup> As a prolific writer, an advisor to the sitting Pope, and an authorized witness and actor in the historical events surrounding the condemnations of 1277, Henry was an active intellectual. He was also a secular theologian. (He did not affiliate himself with an order of Friars, like the Franciscans or Dominicans.) As a result, his works did not benefit from the same sort of organization and preservation shown to some of his contemporaries. Nonetheless, his unique position establishes Henry as a hallmark figure of the rise of the University in the High Middle Ages.

The first printed editions of Henry's work were compiled by Badius in 1518.<sup>2</sup> And until recently, served as the standard text for scholarship regarding his thought. But a contemporary effort is now well underway to produce a modern critical edition. Under the auspices of the Katholiek Universitate Leuven, a devoted group of Henry scholars are

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, G. A., ed., (2011). *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, Leiden-Boston: E.J. Brill. (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 23). Preface. ISBN 978-90-04-18349-0.

<sup>2</sup> Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum*. (ed. Badius, Paris, 1520.)

carefully putting forth the Opera Omnia series, which includes both his *Quodlibeta* and his *Summa*. (What Henry referred to as his *Quaestiones ordinariae*.) The most recent text prepared for publication in the series was article 53 of the *Summa*.

I had the great privilege of working on this project under the tutelage of Dr. Gordon Wilson, the current general editor for the series. From the early stages of variation collations and tracing down manuscript family trees to the final stages of proofreading and tracking down footnote sources- I lived with this text for several years. And while a paleographer's task is like the scribe's (concerned primarily with the accurate transmission of the text), the philosopher in me could not help but notice the content of the material I was transcribing.

Article 53 is comprised of ten questions concerning 'Those Things That Pertain to the Distinction of the Persons.' The first question asks, 'Whether it is necessary to hold that there is a person in God.' That is a very interesting and unexpected place for Henry to begin. He does not immediately invoke the authority of scripture, nor assume an agreement upon the meaning of relevant terms. He begins the discussion by getting his ideas, his terms, the language- clear. He is interested in getting to the heart of the way in which we think about, and talk about, the notion of personhood. Is it a necessary tool to use? There is no point, so it is implied, in arguing around the problems attached to the term, if the term serves no good purpose, or if there is another term which might serve our purposes more accurately. Acknowledging this, Henry considers those terms which are relevant to the persons of the Trinity- asking of each 'does this term do a

better job at referencing the divine, and our concept of the divine, than the term person does?’ As we will see, he believes the alternate terms fail at the task. Thus, he concludes that ‘*persona*’ serves as a unique placeholder, linguistically and conceptually, for an incommunicable aspect of the essential nature of certain created and uncreated beings.

This small, perhaps seemingly clerical, question demonstrates the ways in which, for Henry, the notion of personhood is intricately tied to many of his most notable teachings- on the Trinity, essence and existence, the notion of relation, free-will, and so on. It is a jumping off point for a much larger conversation about signification, concept formation, and Henry’s infamous ‘intentional distinction.’ And yet, it remains to be seen whether Henry has a comprehensive philosophy of personhood, as such. If he does, it behooves us to uncover it. For, while there is now a consensus amongst Henry scholars on several points, there is also active and vigorous debate. (The recent publication of Brill’s *Companion to Henry of Ghent* stands as a shining example.) I hope this project contributes to our growing understanding of his impressive and comprehensive body of work.

Because this is the first undertaking of its kind since the re-introduction of this text into the larger body of modernly updated, available works, certain situational matters need to be addressed. There is a context to this discussion as a piece of literature- In what manner was this text conceived, written, and presented? What background knowledge is assumed of the audience? What other texts, or thinkers, or discussions should be presumed as relevant? (Such issues are significant when

approaching thinkers writing in the universities of Europe during the High Middle Ages since they highlight the particularities of an academic culture which directly influenced the form and style of their words.) Textual and historical details being established, the content of the text, the arguments put forth therein, can properly be considered.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	vi
Preface .....	viii
Chapter 1 Introductions.....	1
The Philosophical Problems: Persons, Individuals, & Universals.....	1
The Text: <i>Summa</i> , Article 53, question 1 .....	12
Chapter 2 The Traditional Sources.....	17
The Ancients & Medievals on Language .....	18
Definitions of Personhood .....	21
The Problem of Individuation.....	29
Chapter 3 Henry’s Treatment of Relation.....	43
Aristotelian Metaphysics.....	45
The Need for Modification .....	48
Henry’s Discussion of Relation .....	54
Chapter 4 An Exegesis of <i>Summa</i> , Article 53, question 1.....	65
<i>Individuum</i> .....	70
<i>Hoc Aliquid</i> .....	71

<i>Singulare</i> .....	75
<i>Res Naturae</i> .....	79
<i>Subsistentia</i> .....	80
<i>Substare</i> .....	82
<i>Suppositum</i> .....	84
<i>Persona</i> .....	87
Chapter 5 An Analysis of <i>Summa</i> , Article 53, question 1 .....	94
The Eight Terms, Compared .....	95
The Eight Terms, Applied .....	100
Chapter 6 Conclusions .....	110
References .....	119
Appendix A: Looking Forward- Distinction in Article 53 .....	125
Appendix B: Points of Interest for Further Study .....	131

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTIONS

#### THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS: PERSONS, INDIVIDUALS, & UNIVERSALS

As we will see in the exegesis of the fourth chapter, Henry discusses individuals and universals on his way towards considering the divine persons. He is reacting to certain traditions and philosophical problems as he does so. They offer insight into his treatment of the terms. For example, about ten years before Henry is writing in Paris (1277), Roger Bacon discusses the situation of the philosophical problem of individuation. He points out the ways in which explanations of individuation could go, such as those theories worked out by Bonaventure and Aquinas. Roger Bacon and Henry of Ghent each contributed to the development of these positions that happened between 1250 and 1300. So, I include brief summaries of the framework here.

In the High Middle Ages, the standard theological textbook was Peter Lombard's *Book on the Sentences*. The section on the individuation of angels, specifically, provided Medieval thinkers an interesting challenge by which to test their theories of individuation. The conversation quickly broadens from angels to matter, in general.

Given God's complete freedom and omnipotence, the issue was whether God could create several individuals of the same species. (The question is focused on what accounts for a certain thing being an individual distinct from other individuals. As

opposed to what accounts for certain things being the same over time.<sup>3</sup>) For these thinkers, *'individuum'* was defined as something 'undivided in itself.' Of course, the matter is further complicated by types of division.<sup>4</sup> But it was largely agreed upon by the Mid-13<sup>th</sup> Century that to be an individual was to be undivided. There was also consensus that created things belonged to natural kinds, or species, and that there could be several instances of the same species if those things shared a common essence. Angels, furthermore, were considered individuals.

Saint Bonaventure:

Bonaventure posits that all created things are composites of matter and form. For him, matter was the equivalent of potentiality and form was roughly the same as actuality. Thus, every creature is a composite because every creature is the result of the actualization of contingent potentialities. In other words, things could have been otherwise. As he put it, limited and changeable.<sup>5</sup> According to Bonaventure's framework, God is distinct from creatures because he lacks composition. Angels, however, are material/spiritual composites. (Material by quantity, not corporeity or extension.) So, angels may be different in kind from corporeal species, but they are individuated in the same way. Namely, through the union of matter and form. This also

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<sup>3</sup> Also known as synchronic individuation, as opposed to diachronic individuation.

<sup>4</sup> Subject/Predicate, Whole/Parts... Something might be divided into integral parts. Such as Socrates is divided by his soul and body, and his body is divided by his arms and legs... Or, something may be divided into subjective parts. For example, the essence human being is divided into Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. If the whole cannot be predicated of its parts, those parts are integral. By contrast, if the whole can be predicated by its parts, those parts are subjective. As Giorgio Pini summarizes, "When an individual is described as what is 'undivided in itself', the sort of indivisibility that is being referred to is indivisibility into subjective parts. The point is that something is an individual if and only if it is uninstantiable." (Pini p.3)

<sup>5</sup> Pini, 2012. N.9.

allows him to account for multiple instances of the angel species, because form itself is not what is doing the individuating. Its therefore possible to have the same form or essence instantiated in multiple material supposites. Thus, matter becomes integral to the discussion.

Thomas Aquinas:

Thomas Aquinas diverges from the tradition to present an alternative set of starting premises. First, he held that angels were instances of pure form (what he called 'separate substances') not received in matter. (They were immaterial because they are pure minds and minds are immaterial.) And secondly, that form could be numerically multiplied only if is received in matter. (Which, for Aquinas, is always extended matter. And forms, like whiteness, cannot be divided into instantiations by themselves as forms alone.) From which, he concluded, there cannot be several angels of the same species. But, rather, there must be as many individual angels, with as many individual essences, as there are species. Bonaventure would have rejected the first premises. Most who followed, however, take issue with the second. Whether or not Aquinas was successful is another matter. But he did relate individuation and universality with immateriality and intelligibility in a new, unique way. And he opened a new space for thought on the problem of individuation. Because under his schema, there can be a created individual which is individual by itself and not divisible into instantiations.<sup>6</sup> For material things, matter acts as the principle of multiplication and individuation. But immaterial things,

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<sup>6</sup> This is the *materia signata*, or designated matter.

like angels, can be individual not by common essences but by a principle of individuation as their essence.

On March 7, 1277, the bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, with the assistance of a council of theologians (including Henry of Ghent), issued a Condemnation of 220 theses purportedly being taught at the University at Paris. Three of these concerned the problem of the individuation of angels. (Articles 81, 96, 191.) Clearly attributed to Aquinas, they sought issue with the idea that no two angels could belong to the same species. The trouble seemed to be with the implication of a limitation upon God's omnipotence, or ability to create with complete freedom. But, what is important for our purposes here is to consider the academic environment and discussions in which Henry found himself a part of. The controversy over individuation certainly would have been familiar to him as he takes up the subject of personhood and individuation in his *Summa*.

Henry of Ghent:

Henry points out that both frameworks, by Bonaventure and Aquinas alike, fail to satisfy the problem behind the condemnation. The difficulty is that the nature of created beings (whether material or immaterial) places restrictions upon God's ability as creator. He rejects this line of thinking by maintaining that all created essences are common and individualized, not by matter, but by something else added to them.

Henry dealt with the issue of the individuation of angels, specifically, in two places: *Quodlibet* 2, question 8 and *Quodlibet* 5, question 8.<sup>7</sup> These two treatments demonstrate an evolution in Henry's thoughts on the subject. In *Quodlibet* 2, Henry takes issue with the implication that angels are necessary beings. He maintains that Aquinas provides a view which entails the divinity of angels because they are individual essences they cannot fail to exist. (As established by Henry's link between actual existence and individuation. Since he maintained that whatever does not actually exist, exists as a mental construct, and therefore, as a universal.) He does not reject the idea completely. He admits that individuation can occur through the instantiation of matter, just rejects that it is the only way. He allows for a difference here between created and uncreated being.

A few years later, in his fifth *Quodlibet*, Henry treats matter as the 'secondary principle of individuation.' Here he states that any essence, whether material or immaterial, is made individual by a primary principle of individuation. (By this point, the focus is larger than that of angels. It is a problem in all types of things and beings.) This primary principle is the double negative property of not being divided in itself and not being the same as anything else. (In other words, not being multiply instantiated and not being distinct.) The difference, or evolution, lies in the rejection of a need for some extra, positive capacity for multiplication. It is based on his distinction between potentiality and possibility. Something may be inclined to be numerically multiplied, according to Henry, but this is not the same as saying it is possible for an essence to be

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<sup>7</sup> Pini, 2012. N.52.

numerically multiplied. The possession of an inclination implies the possession of a positive feature. A certain form must receive that inclination by way of a real entity like matter. In conjunction, it is also possible for something to be multiply instantiated even in the absence of a positive feature, so long as it does not contradict another feature. Henry identified a sense of possibility as non-repugnance which is different from the standard Aristotelian notion of potentiality. This is an important distinction for his own solution to the problem of individuation.

Roger Bacon:

Roger Bacon's *Communia Naturalium* was written in the 1260s, just a decade before Henry was teaching in the Faculty of Arts.<sup>8</sup> In it, Bacon lays out what he takes to be the primary problems of individuation and universals, and how those problems have led some of his peers to defend unsuccessful solutions.

He treats the problem of individuation in Chapter 9, claiming that its cause has clearly arisen out of his discussion of universals and singulars, even though it as an 'unresolved issue obscured by many false responses.'<sup>9</sup> Three inadequate positions are mentioned. First, there are those who 'say that species is the whole essence of individuals and that it only has different acts of being in them.'<sup>10</sup> Second, there is the position which holds that 'matter added to universal form' results in the individual.<sup>11</sup> And third, 'others maintain that potency is added to species as to a signature, and thus

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<sup>8</sup> 1268-1270. (Hackett.)

<sup>9</sup> Maloney, p.93. *CN*, par. 30.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, par.31.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, par.32.

it is signified in different things.’<sup>12</sup> These are false claims, Bacon argues, since neither man (the universal) nor something added to man (some accidental feature to an essence or matter to a form) makes this man (the individual). This man, the individual man, is prior to man, the universal, ‘in the operation and intent of nature...an individual, in as much as it is an individual, naturally has its own true being and essence first, before its universal arises.’<sup>13</sup> So neither a universal nor anything added to it is the cause of individuation.

As this soul and this body make this man and as soul and body constitute man, Bacon writes, the proper principles entering the essence of an individual constitute him. He cites the seventh book of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle asserts that universal man is composed of universal soul and universal body, and that this man is composed of a particular soul and a particular body (in which one has this rational element and this animal element). Thus, Bacon maintains that the individual is a composition, and so too the universal. Given this criteria for a universal, he points out that there could be endless universals- no first or last- certainly just as many as there are individuals. So, the line of singulars must take precedence in nature over the subordinated line of universals.

He then admonishes the sophists who poorly interpreted Aristotle’s words in *On the Heaven and the Earth*, where Aristotle writes that when one speaks of the heavens, they are speaking only of form, and when one speaks of man they are referring to form

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, par.33.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, par.35.

in matter. The incorrect interpretation is that matter added to specific form makes an individual. 'What is true,' Bacon insists, 'is that matter is not spoken of here in the same sense as when it is the other part of a composite, nor as when it is a subject in generation, but as that which is the foundation of something in which that thing would consist.'<sup>14</sup> Bacon interprets Aristotle to mean that matter as a subject is matter in which there is an accident. In the same way, an individual is the matter in which exists a universal. In this way, a universal is like an accident.

Next, he turns his attention to those who allege on the authority of Boethius that species is the whole being of individuals, and again insists that the being of an individual is twofold. (One is absolute according to those principles inhering in its essence and does not imply species as the being of an individual. The other exists because of the connection one individual has with another by virtue of a common nature, and that being does constitute the species of the individual.)

What then does he suggest, if individuation is not caused by species or anything added to it? He suggests we turn the question around and inquire into the cause of the universal if it is neither the individual nor anything added to it. In other words, he repeats, this whole question is foolish because it stems from the false dichotomy of species/something added on to species, etc. There is no need for the construct. The individual has its own properties, adhering in its own essence. The universal has its own properties.

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<sup>14</sup> Maloney, p.94. *CN*, par.39.

And as to those principles, like matter and form, and their cause of individuation, Bacon asks what causes a universal to be a universal? It is so, they must say, because the Creator made it so according to his propriety and its natures demands. And this goes on for every instance of individuation and universal and is therefore finally dismissed as a foolish pursuit.

The problem of universals, essentially, is whether universals exist in the mind or outside of the mind. (This is similar to Porphyry's question. When we say, 'this is a tree', does the term signify something in the object or is it just a name?) But there is a moderate path. So, he posits the question with a slight amendment. Do universals exist in themselves, in the soul, or in things outside the mind? The solutions given, he suggests, fall into the following possible categories:

1. Universals exist only in the mind. There is no universality which exists outside the mind. (The 'celebrated position'.)
2. The universal exists only in singulars/things and does not depend on the mind at all.<sup>15</sup> Universality affects only mental words/concepts. (Bacon)
3. Universal aspects exist outside the mind but inside the mind as universals. This moderate realism draws a distinction between that which is conceived and the way it is conceived.  
  
(\*3a. Universals exists as an intention- what can only be called universal in an equivocal sense, as an abstracted likeness, species in the mind. It is in the thing

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<sup>15</sup> *Communia Naturalium*, p.102 1-3.

as an indeterminate. But it does not have proper existence outside or inside the mind.)

4. Universals exist outside the mind, not in singulars, but as universal/ideal entities.

Bacon's own solution to the problem is complicated and has garnered legitimate debate. He distinguishes between the real universal and the mental universal. Universals are not just, or only, the species as mental intention. They are extra-mental as the basis for scientific objectivity. He maintains that the universal is either in the mind or in things. A universal arises from common matter and common form, which are always present with the proper matter and form, so have no need of being split apart. Furthermore, the universal precedes the knowledge process because it is merely a nature of which singulars agree. The particulars agree without any act of the mind. Yet they occur and agree in existing individual supposites, not as separate Platonic forms.

Pointing to Boethius and Al-Ghazali, Bacon acknowledges the view of accidents as the source of individuation. But rejects these accounts in favor of an interconnection of form and matter. Since matter and form constitute the thing. For Bacon, an individual is an individual and a substance. In the Parisian lectures he holds that matter is the cause of individuation, but form is a co-cause. (The latter as an instrumental/formal cause, rather than the principle cause.) In his later work, *Communia Naturalium*, he holds consistent to these views, but offers new qualifications. His framework serves as an alternative to what he understands as subordinating individuals to their universal.

*"But if we would speak about the universal nature that is the directing power of the universe, [we should say that] it intends and brings about an individual*

*first and principally, about which there is mention in the Book of the Six Principles. Nature operates in a hidden manner in things: once a determinate man is generated, man as such is generated. And the cause of this is that one individual excels all universals in the world, for a universal is nothing but the agreement of many individuals.” ([OHI,II], 94, = TTUM, 86)*

Theodore Crowley (1950) and Jorge J. E. Gracia (1991) saw the beginnings of a kind of nominalism in Bacon’s remarks. But more recently, focusing on *Communia Naturalium* specifically, Thomas S. Maloney has made the case for reading Bacon as an extreme realist.<sup>16</sup> In this later treatise, we can at least say, the individual has ontological power over genera and species. As Jeremiah Hackett summarizes, “His account becomes an attack on contemporary positions influenced by Albertus Magnus that would subordinate the individual to the universal. Species and genera are there for the sake of the production of the individual.”<sup>17</sup> For Bacon, certainly, the universal (whatever it is) is tied up with and dependent upon the individual. He treats the universal as a common nature in which particulars agree, extending into them and existing in them. And he argues that without particulars, there can be no universals. They are related in the same essential way matter and form are- they cannot be separated.

This is remarkably similar to the hesitations Henry demonstrates when speaking of the divine persons as individuals for the very fact that they are inextricably linked to universals. When we consider the account by Bacon in *Communia Naturalium* alongside the philosophical problem of individuation discussed previously, it becomes clear that Bacon’s teachings must have influenced Henry’s careful treatment of the subject in *Summa*, Article 53, question 1. Bacon’s challenges certainly would have had some

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<sup>16</sup> Maloney, 1985.

<sup>17</sup> Hackett, 2015. (Par.4.5)

impact on Henry, who no doubt read his predecessors provocation "Since the whole rabble [at Paris] holds the contrary position, because of certain authorities, the views of the latter must be presented" ([OHI,II], 96 =TTUM, 90).

And so, Henry inherits this rich debate about individuation, universals, matter and form, and turns it from the subject of angels, to matter and form, to the question of divine persons. *Individuum*, undivided in itself, is by now a complicated and problematic notion. That understanding serves as explanation for Henry's dismissal of the term in favor of *persona* for conveying the proper nature of the persons in a monotheistic, yet triune, God.

#### THE TEXT: *SUMMA*, ARTICLE 53, QUESTION 1

It is important to acknowledge this text as a part of Henry's *Summa*, as opposed to his *Quodlibeta*. As Gordon Wilson details in his contribution to the Brill Companion series, Henry's written legacy is nuanced and calls for careful consideration. The two most significant works attributed to Henry, his *Quodlibeta* and *Quaestiones ordinariae* (*Summa*) are two very different types of literature. Both represent an aspect of the academic culture of the time but as separate genres.

The *Quodlibeta* are the result of public disputations, held in Paris during the Lent and Advent seasons, where a master would voluntarily participate in an oral question and answer session with the public. Any question could be posed of the master, and a few days later the master came before the public to resolve them. The questions coming from the audience were not under the control of the master, though he did have the

opportunity to produce a written version afterward so that certain ideas could be expounded upon. The *Quodlibetal* material (15 in Henry's case) are relevant to Henry's *Summa* for the purposes of dating as well as authentication. Because the *Quodlibeta* were raised regularly over a period of fifteen years, almost the span of Henry's career in the Theology Faculty, they have become, as Gordon Wilson puts it "the Rosetta stone for unlocking the dating of articles in Henry's *Quaestiones ordinariae*."<sup>18</sup> The *Quodlibeta* make reference to the *Summa* (Qo) and vice versa, allowing scholars to authenticate each as Henry's own teachings and reconstruct the timeline of his writings.

Unlike the *Quodlibeta*, Henry was in complete control of his *Quaestiones ordinariae* (*Summa*). Based upon his classroom lectures in the theology faculty in Paris, these questions were chosen, formulated, and organized by Henry alone. There is a reason to believe, by Henry's own admission, that the *Summa* is unfinished. He intended it to be two, symmetrical sections: one on God and the second on creatures. But, presumably because of his death, the second section was never completed. Nonetheless, what we do have stands as a purposefully constructed work on its own.

There are at least three stages in the transmission of Henry's *Summa*. The first was the delivery of the lecture. One assumes this oral stage involved preliminary notes of some kind. The second stage was when Henry prepared a text, based on the lecture, for the University. The third was when the university prepared an exemplar divided into

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<sup>18</sup> (2011b) "Henry of Ghent's Written Legacy," in G.A. Wilson, ed., *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, Leiden-Boston: E.J. Brill. (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 23), p. 12.

pecia for distribution to scholars and students.<sup>19</sup> Due to the nature of teaching over time, corrections were made, and variations arose across manuscript copies. For this reason, it is difficult to concisely 'date' the *Summa*. There is the date of the original lecture, the first composition given to the university, the transcription of the library copy, or the availability of a bookstore model. Scholars are admittedly uncertain on this topic. Raymond Macken suggested that articles 1-61 of the *Summa* were delivered to the university for it to make its copy all at once at Paris in 1289. While R. Wielockx proposed, based on a manuscript of Godfrey of Fontaine, that a copy was available much earlier- perhaps as early as 1276. It is unclear whether the *Summa* came out in one piece, or was gradually made available upon section completions, or finally delivered as a whole posthumously.<sup>20</sup>

What we do know is that these questions are, in fact, the teachings of Henry of Ghent, that they represent his thoughts and work on theology and philosophy while he was teaching in the Theology Faculty at Paris<sup>21</sup>, and that they were originally written sometime between 1275 and the remaining decade or more of his career.

Now that the critical edition of this text has been published, the great task of translations and commentary can begin. The Latin is now ready for official translations

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>21</sup> Including also his time as a member of the Faculty of Arts.

to accompany it. Roland Teske's English translation of the *Summa*, article 53 was published in 2014. I have used his translation exclusively here.<sup>22</sup>

In the fifty-third article of his *Quaestiones Ordinariae (Summa)*, Henry of Ghent considers 'Those Things That (in God) Pertain to the Distinction of the Persons.' By 'things' Henry means attributes, and he has just dealt (in article fifty-two) with those attributes that in God pertain to the common substance. For Henry, the distinction of the Persons is nuanced and requires a multi-faceted investigation. He develops the following organization of what he takes those requirements to be:

- A. Proper distinction between individual persons and the relations between them.
- B. Proper distinction, of individual persons, as general or particular.
- C. Proper distinction between persons and their properties.
- D. Proper distinction between manner of being and emanation.

To properly address the matter of those things/attributes that pertain to the distinction of the persons (in God), Henry takes up ten questions. Each of the ten questions, in some way, deal with our understanding of God as having the attribute of person, or the function/meaning of the language we use to develop and convey that understanding. He begins, as mentioned above, with the question of whether it is necessary to hold that there is a person in God. (And here, he carefully distinguishes between the terms we use to talk about persons, or beings with similar attributes. Essentially, he begins by clarifying and defining his terms.) Question two asks whether,

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<sup>22</sup> *Henry of Ghent's Summa of Ordinary Questions, (Articles 53–55) on the Divine Persons, Translation from the Latin*, Introduction, and Notes by Roland J. TESKE (Milwaukee, WI, 2014).

in God, 'person' has being in God in a proper sense or a transferred sense. (Here, he considers the sense/reference of the term as it relates to the real object.) And so on.

In these ten questions, we find a reflection on the traditional sources for a definition of person, an original treatment of eight terms that are seemingly similar to the term 'person,' an attempt to reconcile Aristotelian notions with Augustinian ones, further insight into Henry's own theory of universals, and more. As the first formal exegesis and analysis to be undertaken of Henry's *Summa*, art.53 since its recent preparation for the critical edition, we must begin with the first question- Henry's treatment of eight terms, as they pertain to the necessity of personhood in relation to the divine essence. In this question, Henry specifically refers to the discussion of person he inherited. So, the next chapter provides insight into the traditional sources he is attempting to reconcile. At that point, the stage should be set for a proper examination of the text.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE TRADITIONAL SOURCES

It is often said of philosophers (by other philosophers) that he or she ‘did not live in a vacuum.’ This adage serves as a reminder that, while there is value in carefully homing in on a text, or even a fragment of text, it is also important to consider the larger context within which a thinker or idea is situated. For medieval thinkers, writing as Henry did during the rise of the University, this consideration is almost a requirement. (The nature of the material alone is an important aspect to include in one’s investigations into a text, since the difference between a *Summa* and *Quodlibetal* questions can also result in a difference in style or approach.) We will see, from the onset of the first question, that Henry makes use of many sources and alludes to a variety of thinkers throughout his own discussions. If one is unaware of the background and details of these traditions, one will miss out on the full meaning of his references.

So, at this point, let us turn our attention to the traditional sources on the distinction of the divine persons that Henry has inherited, and is responding to. While he directly mentions three thinkers (Augustine, Boethius, and Richard of St. Victor), there are other historical conversations happening in the background of the one regarding the definition of person. Those are the ancient problem of language

(articulated by Plato and Aristotle, regarding the relationship between thoughts, words, and things), and a developing debate about individuation and universals.

I consider the traditional sources as addressing three separate, but related, philosophical problems: Language, Personhood, and Individuation.

## THE ANCIENTS & MEDIEVALS ON LANGUAGE

The thirteenth century may have seen a heightened sophistication in theories about the relationship between language and reality, but the attempt at such a formulation has ancient roots.

In the *Cratylus*, Plato expresses concern over the ways in which we might explain the connection between words and the things they are meant to represent. He sets up the dichotomy that this relationship is either one of mere convention (whereby any name can be linked to anything, properly, if there is agreement) or some absolute feature of reality (whereby certain words are naturally suited to represent certain things). The standard interpretation of his theory of Forms has posited Plato, himself, as a realist of the latter sort, but whether that is correct is not my concern here. What is important is the distinction between the real and the linguistically agreed upon, and the direction that Plato's student, Aristotle, chose to take his own examinations in response.<sup>23</sup>

In *On Interpretation*, Aristotle argues for the conventionalist understanding of the relationship between words and things, claiming that a name is a spoken sound

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<sup>23</sup> See Umberto Eco, *On Meaning and Denotation*.

significant by convention. According to his semantic scheme, things in the world are signified by words/symbols/sounds only through concepts (or as he calls them, affections of the soul/mental images). These notions, or affections of the soul, are the same for everyone (despite variance in sound/symbol/words) because they are affected by the forms of reality which are also the same. Thus, these mental images- these semantic intermediaries- are 'universal.'

Following Aristotle, the Stoics picked up and expanded upon this idea of an intermediate possibility between Plato's original real/mental dichotomies. Giving further attention to the project on the truth of sentences, begun by Aristotle in his *Categories*, the Stoics developed their own ontology which consisted of signifiers, name-bearers, and significations. (These significations, or *lekta*, were understood as states-of-affairs.)<sup>24</sup>

Early medieval thinkers were influenced by these ancient debates, and both Augustine and Boethius alike are deeply indebted to these earlier schemes. They understood the relationship between words, thoughts, and things as such: written symbols signify spoken utterances, which in turn signify a mental image (common to all humans), and the terms of this image signify things in the world.<sup>25</sup> However, Henry's medieval predecessors did not agree upon the details of this scheme, and many had found themselves in trouble for the stances that they had taken as a result. Peter Abelard, for example, considered the problems of language in relation to logic and

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<sup>24</sup> Marenbon, John. 2005.

<sup>25</sup> In medieval texts, '*significatio*' is typically a causal/psychological relation, such that- *w* signifies a thing, *x*, if and only if *w* causes a thought of *x* in the mind of a language hearer/speaker.

accepted the usual causal scheme of signification, but diverged in his conceptualist understandings of it. For Abelard, these universals do not actually exist in the world- in fact, nothing exists in the world except particulars. The universals, signified by predicates, are merely thought-content.

It is this sort of discussion that led to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century phenomenon referred to as Boethius' speculative grammar. The speculative grammarians sought to give grammar the kind of universality required of an Aristotelian science. (In other words, they wanted a scheme that extended beyond the Latin language in which they particularly worked.) To accomplish this, they held a distinction between modes of being (properties/attributes of things- like being pretty), modes of thinking (an intellect thinking about an attribute- she is pretty), and modes of signifying (the linking process which makes something a part of speech and adds features to it, such as case or tense).

This is the debate that the logicians and philosophers at Paris in the thirteenth century inherited. And they were tasked with developing further the ways in which this theory of language correlated with other theological and philosophical commitments. And while Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham are usually put forth as representative of this project, Henry was also significantly involved with it. Of interest to our purposes here, this word-thought-thing relationship has deeply important implications for a theory of the term 'person.'

In the fifty-third article of his *Summa*, Henry directly mentions Augustine, Boethius, and Richard of St. Victor. He returns to these three thinkers repeatedly

throughout the article. For Augustine, Boethius, Richard of St. Victor, and Henry- the features of terms have broader importance than grammatical correctness, especially when it comes to terms that directly apply to the divine. And their idea of the divine nature, and the words they used to signify the real thing, was one made up of three persons.

## DEFINITIONS OF PERSONHOOD

When it comes to discussions of individuality, and personhood more specifically, one can see the influence of Boethius upon latter generations through the likes of Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, and I argue, Henry. Yet, as we progress further- into late scholasticism- one will see that references to his name and works begin to disappear from both logical and metaphysical treatises on the subject. A large part of the reason for this is what happened to Boethius' writings during the High Middle Ages, when thinkers such as Henry began to correct and critique them considering alternative accounts. In Henry's case, Boethius was believed to have been corrected by Richard of St. Victor. So, borrowing from Richard's framework, Henry develops his own account of divine persons which seeks to improve upon the problematic arguments he had inherited.

The attempts we see in Henry's *Summa*, art.53, represent the ways in which Boethius was slowly traded out for newer models, or at least, was subsumed into them after having been adjusted to fit. Neither Augustine nor Boethius laid out a purposeful treatise on individuality alone, so their ideas on such topics must be gleaned from

fragments and statements found within other discussions. Nevertheless, one can reconstruct a basic account of Boethius' position from his three main Commentaries and *De Trinitate*, as most of the Medievals understood it.<sup>26</sup>

As was suggested previously, Boethius' *De Trinitate* was perhaps the most influential text that Henry and his contemporaries relied upon to construct Boethius' own views about personhood. The full title of this work highlights its theological nature of the treatise- *Quomodo Trinitas unus Deus ac non tres dii*. (Or, concerning how the trinity is One God and not Three Gods.) The intentions behind this text were to show how unity and multiplicity are reconciled in the divinity, which for Christian thinkers, is monotheistic yet triune in nature. In this work, he attacks this project by contrasting the notions of plurality and unity, and after examining the principle cause of the former, argues that there can be no such notion attributed to God. (For, there are no accidental or specific distinctions found in the divine nature.) For purposes of his discussion of plurality, the key passage of the text for medieval thinkers became:

*"The principle (ratio) of this union [i.e. the union of the trinity] is indifference. Difference cannot be avoided by those who add to or take from [this unity], as do the Arians, who, by positing degrees of merit within the Trinity, break it up and convert it to plurality. For the source (principium) of plurality is otherness; apart from otherness plurality is unintelligible. And so, the diversity between three or more things lies in genus or species or number. For 'diverse' is predicated of everything of which 'the same' (idem) is said. But 'the same' is said in three ways: By genus, as when a man [is said to be] the same as a horse because their genus, animal, is the same. Or by species, as when Cato [is said to be] the same as Cicero because [they belong] to the same species, man. Or by number, as with Tully and Cicero, because he is one*

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<sup>26</sup> His commentaries include the two on Porphyry's *Isagoge*, one on Aristotle's *Categories*, and two on *On Interpretation*.

*in number. This is why 'diverse' also is said by genus, species, and number. But variety of accidents causes (facit) numerical difference. Three men differ neither by genus nor species but by their accidents, for if we mentally remove from them [all other] accidents, still each one occupies a different place which cannot possibly be regarded as the same for each, since two bodies cannot occupy the same place, and place is an accident. Wherefore, it is because they are plural by their accidents that they are plural in number."*<sup>27</sup>

One can distinguish, in this passage, three distinct issues. The first principle identifies indifference (or lack of difference) as the source of all unity. The second is concerned with various kinds of difference. And the last part of the passage identifies the cause of numerical difference. In all three sections, a large part of the difficulty of interpretation lies in Boethius' unsystematic use of terminology. So, when we turn to the issues contained within the problem of individuality below, we will see why this text would have proved problematic for later thinkers who shared the basic intentions of the overall goal- Boethius does not adequately address them. The intension of individuality is not discussed here, though the intension of numerical difference is discussed elsewhere.<sup>28</sup> Extension and ontological status are not explicitly discussed, and neither is the principle of individuation. And, Boethius offers little in the way of an examination of discernibility or linguistic function.

Henry shares the intentions which are behind this text with Boethius. Namely, he too wants to demonstrate how the univocal nature of the divine can be reconciled with the notion of triune persons composing it. Where Henry disagrees with Boethius is the extension of this notion of individuation to the nature of the divine persons. For, what Boethius says in the same text about a person, brings up unique philosophical problems,

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<sup>27</sup> Gracia, 1984. N. 65, p.98.

<sup>28</sup> See *Ibid.*, p.103.

not only for Henry, but for most of the medieval thinkers engaging in the topic. To see how this becomes so problematic, we must now specifically narrow our focus of this text to Boethius' definition of person.

Boethius defines person as 'an individual substance of a rational nature.'<sup>29</sup> His definition is useful for the philosophers of the High Middle Ages because it employs those philosophical groupings found in Aristotle's *Categories*, in such a way that Boethius' 'individual substance' corresponds to Aristotle's 'primary substance' (*ousia prote*), his 'nature' to the Aristotelian '*physis*' and his use of 'rational' to the Greek '*logon ekhon*'.

According to Aristotle, a primary substance is that which is neither the predicate of a substance nor inherent in a substrate but is a substrate itself. (Substrate, taken from the Greek *hypokeimenon* and Latin *subjectum*, to mean 'that which lies beneath' or 'subject of becoming'.) In other words, substrate refers to that of which a.) Universal concepts are predicates, and b.) Accidental properties adhere in. Since the substrate is not predicated of anything else and not inherent in anything else, it must be 'in itself'. The substance is primary, because it must be permanent, lasting, 'underneath', as opposed to secondary qualities which do not exist 'in themselves', but rather, in the substrate, yet are still constitutive of its essence. Hence, Boethius' interpretation of 'individual substance'. Boethius meant by 'individual' not indivisible, but undivided in

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<sup>29</sup> '*rationalis naturae individua substantia*' Cf. *De Persona et Duabus Naturis*, ch.3, and *Contra Eutychem III*, 1-6.

itself. Thus, a primary substance must be first, a substrate, or subject, and must be individual.

Boethius' expression of a 'rational nature' within the definition of person implies that the individual substance is clarified by the essence of possessing *logos*. Boethius takes the notion of 'nature' from the Greek *physis/phuo*, meaning birth, and the Latin *nascor, natura*, which means that which a living thing is by birth. The quality of being 'rational' refers to possessing logos (*logon ekhon*) as *ratio, verbum, or oratio/sermo* (reason including discourse and literacy).

The problem, then, arises because, according to Aristotle, metaphysics applies to all things. Boethius' definition of person, then, must apply to divine persons, or the person of Jesus Christ, as well as other human persons. His account, however, proves problematic for reconciling a triune, yet monotheistic God- with three persons, as father, son, and Holy Spirit. For one thing, what would it mean to say that the persons of the trinity are separate substances? Or, that they are the same substance? God's nature, as triune, cannot be discussed in the same way the substance of a human being can. Furthermore, attributing the quality of a 'rational nature' to God also proves problematic.

Henry, of course, inherits these metaphysical traditions of interpretation which developed from Boethius' claims in *De Trinitate*. But, this is not the only tradition with which he is familiar. For, Henry is also aware of the writings of Peter Abelard and John of Salisbury, who grounded their own interpretations in Boethius' logical works. Like those

concerned with the metaphysical debate alone, Abelard and John of Salisbury share various features which allow them to be investigated together for our purposes. In addition to their references of the Porphyrian-Boethian notion of individuality as unpredictability of many<sup>30</sup>, those who studied the logical works, also tend to reject the cause of individuation as accidental and insist that it be extended to all entities, whether substantial or accidental.

This tradition pays much closer attention to the semantic and linguistic issues involved with the discussion of proper names and terms; an issue largely overlooked by the others with purely theological, or metaphysical, concerns. Abelard's own position, as is examined by Gracia, is that individuals, unlike universals, are both things/objects and words. In his logical works, moreover, he considers them primarily as words. Hence, the semantic/linguistic concerns that seep into the High Middle Ages. However, Abelard does not provide a theory concerning their ontological status. For this reason, Gracia contrasts Abelard's theory against those of an 'Accidental Theory of Substantial Individuation',<sup>31</sup> an 'Essential' one,<sup>32</sup> and a 'Formalist Theory with Criticisms',<sup>33</sup> stating that Abelard's own theory is a 'Word View' of individuation.

At this point, we hit that historical boundary that Gracia wrote of between the Early Middle Ages and the shift in the High Middle Ages towards modernity. This is in no way meant to be an exhaustive account of Boethius or the early medieval debate about

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<sup>30</sup> A point first maintained by Aristotle.

<sup>31</sup> Gracia, 1984. p.198.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p.210.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p.212.

individuation that he inspired. It is a significant point in our project though, because it represents the bulk of the theories that Henry inherited, before contributing his own thoughts to the historical/philosophical narrative of personhood. Though his discussion also fits into the larger debate on universals, this study restricts itself primarily to individuation as it applies to the concept and meaning of the term 'person' (*persona*). I have drawn this restriction for several reasons, among them breadth of the subject and texts yet to be published, but also, I think that Henry's discussion of person in article 53 of his *Summa*, specifically, provides a philosophically significant insight into the development and evolution of the larger conversation.

The crux of the problem, for Henry, is that Boethius did not distinguish clearly between the epistemological issue concerning the cause (or principle) of discernibility of individuals and the metaphysical one. Gracia states that only in the later Middle Ages do we find a "consistent and prolonged attempt to deal with these two problems separately, although the epistemic issue was never regarded as important as the metaphysical one." For, as he argues, "this is only to be expected of an age which had no place for epistemology as a separate science."<sup>34</sup>

In his *De Trinitate*, Richard of St. Victor offers a discussion of personhood which attempts to resolve the problems found with Boethius' definition. The result is a meaning of the term which focuses on existence, as a distinct issue apart from essence. In the fourth book of this text, after admitting the difficulty with considering a plurality of persons in a unity of substance, Richard defines person as an 'incommunicably proper

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<sup>34</sup> Gracia, 1984. p.110.

existence of a spiritual nature' (*spiritualis naturae incommunicabilis existentia*). He rejects the connotations of the Greek *hypostasis*, pointing out that a word denoting substance may signify a more generic or specific property, whereas the person signifies 'an individual, singular, incommunicable property'. When considered with this distinction, substance is understood to answer 'what?' by categorizing something with a common property, whereas person answers 'who?' by giving a name (or its equivalent) through a singular property. Because, when it comes to the divine persons, they share one simple and indivisible being, God. Plurality of such personal properties must not imply plurality of substance.

Here, Richard presents a division relevant to the definition of 'person' between mode of being and mode of obtaining being. The former being one's nature, or that which he/she more generically or specifically possesses, the latter as obtention (*obtinencia*) - the principle of one's origin. This distinction allows him to distinguish between angelic personhood, human personhood, and divine personhood. To have divine personhood, then, is to be a person solely by obtention. To be an angelic person is to be so purely by qualitative difference. And to have human personhood means to be a person according to both modes simultaneously. Obtention, or the divine, becomes the common existence or mode of being shared by all three. Because of the incommunicable nature of the divine subsistence, one may speak of several personal existences without compromising the unity of the substance (divine substance).

Henry is not alone in his reading of Richard's definition as providing a philosophical correction to the one found in Boethius. But, he is alone in what he does because of that acceptance. Henry no doubt appreciated Richard's alterations because they provide the basis for a relational definition of person, generally, and divine persons, specifically.<sup>35</sup> Taking up this project, he offers his own account of personhood, one which shows a rather surprising (and some would say modern) awareness of epistemic issues, arising from the metaphysical conversation at hand.

### The Problem of Individuation

This dissertation, like the article it examines, is primarily concerned with Henry of Ghent's treatment of the divine persons. But the problem of individuation, though not explicitly stated as such during the Early Middle Ages, is intricately linked to the ideas of personhood and universals which are developed in the thirteenth century. Because of this correlation, I refer to Jorge Gracia's scholarship on individuation in the Middle Ages as a point of reference. And so, a brief summation of his arguments may be helpful for those unfamiliar with the historical progression of these ideas.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See J. Gray paper on relation (2008).

<sup>36</sup> For further philosophical connection between persons and individuals, we should consider P.F. Strawson's *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*. His treatment of the 'primitive person' is similar to this notion of incommunicability. In Chapter 3 of that text, Strawson suggests acknowledging the concept of person as primitive i.e. as a concept that cannot be analyzed further in a certain way or another. That means: "the concept of a person is the concept of a type of entity, such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation & co. are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type" (Strawson 101, 102). Thus, the concept of a person is logically prior to that of an individual consciousness.

Gracia devoted two separate texts to the philosophical issue of individuation in the Middle Ages. The first, *Individuation in the Early Middle Ages*, and the second *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages until the Counter-Reformation*. He considers these time periods separately, in part due to the enormous span of time they encompass, but primarily for the marked distinction between the treatment of individuation before and after the thirteenth century. These thinkers share a common textual foundation for their notion of individuation. As Gracia points out, this limited textual foundation changes and increases enormously when, during the latter part of the twelfth century, numerous translations from ancient and Islamic medieval works are introduced to the West. This is precisely the time at which Henry is writing- as a member of the Faculty of Arts at the University at Paris. This introduction of new ideas and texts forces new accounts to be provided for old problems, especially those metaphysical theories about the nature of being and the difference of individuation. This transition can easily be seen in the High Middle Ages, when one considers the breadth of attention paid to those topics in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. (Gracia argues that the last of the authors to be unaffected by the new texts and ideas are Peter Abelard and John of Salisbury, and that these writings represent an historical boundary of sorts- where any study on the topics must draw a line of distinction.)<sup>37</sup>

As Gracia acknowledges, the thirteenth century is the first place in Western philosophical literature where the issues associated with individuality are considered for

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<sup>37</sup> Gracia, 1994. pp.11-13.

their own sake. Early medieval writers pay great attention, for instance, to the so-called problem of universals. Yet there are no treatises, disputations, or chapters of books devoted solely to the question of individuals. (p.255) His thesis is that they failed to discuss the problem separately because they were too focused on the related issues of solving the philosophical problem of universals and explaining the theological doctrine of the Trinity.

The relevance of individuality to the context of the Trinity is quite obvious. Since individuality was primarily understood by the early Medievals as distinction or numerical difference, the dilemma of a triune God becomes one of logical consistency. If God is one, then he must be indivisible, that is, individual. But that contradicts the triune aspect of the formula, which grants divinity to three persons. If God is three, numerically different, persons it contradicts the monotheistic aspect of the formula, which insists upon one God. (p256)

This was Boethius' main concern in *De Trinitate*. And it marks an indisputable intersection between the notions of individuation and personhood. Gracia attributes what little attention was paid to the problem of individuality to a philosophical maturity, but also to some basic changes in the general outlook between the ancient and medieval worlds. Namely, "the progressive and continuous growth of an appreciation for the ontological status and value of the material world of sense perception, where individuality is most evident."<sup>38</sup> In other words, the doctrine of a monotheistic, triune

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<sup>38</sup> Gracia, 1994. p259.

God gives individuality an importance which could not have arisen in ancient philosophy.

To focus on the problem of individuation in the Middle Ages specifically, let us follow Gracia's division between the early authors and the Scholastics. Just as it is in contemporary scholarship, in the Middle Ages there were two possible ways of approaching the philosophical issue of individuality: as a metaphysical issue, or an epistemic one. Most of the early authors, following Boethius and grappling with Trinitarian theological concerns, restricted their focus to the metaphysical question of individuation. These authors discuss the ontological status of the principle, but do not exhibit semantic concerns with, for example, the function of proper names or indexicals. (That being said, the epistemic approach does have medieval roots. Abelard, being the most exemplary author, did present preliminary concerns with the logical and linguistic issues related to individuality.)<sup>39</sup>

Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham are typically the primary thinkers to be considered in discussion of this philosophical shift. They do provide a representative sample, sans Henry, of what happened during that time. But it is not exhaustive and comparisons with other thinkers, like Henry, helps us further refine the accuracy of the standard model. Rather than a few dominant voices projecting change, the Universities of the High Middle Ages were full of passionate and diverse voices that contributed to the evolving conversation- Henry's among them. Most of the thinkers of the time were invested in reconciling Aristotle with the previously available texts, based in large part

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<sup>39</sup> Gracia, 1994. p.260.

on Plato, Augustine, and Boethius. The ways in which they attempt to do that, however, as well as the impact their attempts have had, varies greatly from writer to writer.

Henry is hesitant about the rush his colleagues made towards Aristotle, and in an attempt to carefully and conservatively contribute to the ongoing dialogue around him, he too seeks reconciliation.

Here, the discussion is almost entirely based on the textual tradition begun by Boethius. This tradition contains Boethius' *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, his theological treatise *De Trinitate*, and to a lesser extent, his Commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*. As Gracia reminds us, "Boethius' texts, including the key passages from Porphyry and Aristotle he translated, constitute the historical origin and source of all subsequent discussions of individuation until the translations from Arabic begin to appear..."<sup>40</sup> For this reason, I shall limit my own contextual background discussion to the writings of Boethius, rather than extending the tradition to include Augustine and Plotinus as well.

Amongst those thinkers who have been concerned with the problem of individuation, there is a shared metaphysical intuition about the place of objects in our world. First, an individual thing/object is distinct from all other entities. (Even those which are of the same specific kind) Second, they lose their fundamental character if they are divided into parts. Third, individuals are one of a group class (or type) which has or can have several members. Fourth, they remain the same through time and various

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<sup>40</sup> Gracia, 1984. p.13.

changes, and lastly, are not predicated of other things.<sup>41</sup> The intuition may be immediate and shared, but the implications of the possible conflicts are not. From a philosophical perspective, if one is concerned with the claim that sameness or similarity is basic to class/type, how does one also account for individual difference within the class? Yet, if difference is taken, contrarily, to be fundamental in such instances, how might one account for the similarity between class members? So too do problems arise from the individual's apparent inability to be divided, its enduring capacity across time and change, or the epistemic nuances of distinction? These are all problems with individuation, writ large, but when they were applied to the issue of person in the Middle Ages, they took on a unique problematic structure- specifically since they were applied to both human and divine persons. For, human persons are subject to the corporeal implications of their existence, but divine persons have a different nature, if nothing else, by virtue of being creator as opposed to created.

Whether metaphysical or epistemic, Gracia organizes the philosophical task of accounting for individuation according to seven separate issues: the intention of individuality, the extension of individuality, the ontological status of individuality, the principle of individuation<sup>42</sup>, the discernibility of individuals, the function of proper names and indexicals, and the principle of the identity of indiscernibles.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Traditional Aristotle.

<sup>42</sup> To clarify, the nature of an individual is an issue different from how a species gets individuated. My thesis concerns the nature of the individual.

<sup>43</sup> Gracia, 1994. p.21.

## A. The Intention of Individuality

Being one of the few authors to address the topic, Boethius' texts become the bases for medieval notions of individuality. In his Commentary on the "*Isagoge*" Boethius posits four different ways of understanding what is meant by individuality. Something can properly be said to be individual if (1) it is indivisible into integral parts, (2) it is indivisible into specific or generic parts, including things belonging to the same species or genus, (3) it is not predicable of many, and (4) it has the quality of being non-transferable.

In the Commentary of Aristotle's "*Categories*" he distinguishes between individuality (as indivisibility) and particularity (as impredicability). In the Commentary of Aristotle's "*De Interpretatione*" (the second edition) he presents a metaphysical view of individuality as incommunicability. And, as eluded to above, he treats the subject as referring to numerical difference in *De Trinitate*. Gracia notes "Most early medievals failed to see that individuality has to do primarily with non-instantiability or, as later scholastics put it, incommunicability."<sup>44</sup>

Hence, having inherited this tradition, we understand the assumptions Henry makes about individual as an '*individuum*' standing under a universal. And furthermore, why he dismisses it as separate from his discussion of incommunicability. Yet we can also see how he represents a shifting away from the established treatment by concerning himself, not just with the intension of the term, but the extension as well.

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<sup>44</sup> Gracia, 1994. p.262.

## B. The Extension of Individuality

The extension of individuality concerns which type or category of things the term refers. Early medieval authors can be described only either as moderate realists (or alternatively moderate nominalists) or just as nominalists. There are no strong realists in the thirteenth century, in the Platonic sense, who hold that nothing that exists is individual. The sobering influence of Aristotle and the Christian ideas concerning the persons and creation certainly seem to have had their effect in this period. (p263)

## C. The Ontological Status of Individuality

This issue regards the metaphysical categorization of 'individuation' and only becomes a point of interest in the later Middle Ages. 'The problem we face with regard to the issue of the ontological status of individuality is that there is just not enough evidence on the basis of which to reach definite conclusions about what most early medieval authors thought in this respect.'<sup>45</sup>

## D. The Principle of Individuation

This is the aspect of the problem of individuality that concerned early, and for that matter later as well, medieval authors the most. None of them used the terms 'principle' or 'cause', in discussions of this problem. This sort of terminology was introduced only in the thirteenth century and became standard subsequently. ...Instead of asking about the 'principle' or the 'cause' of individuation, they asked about what 'made' things individual. Most early authors adhered to the view, developed from

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<sup>45</sup> Gracia, 1994. p.265.

Porphyry through Boethius, that what makes an Aristotelian primary substance individual and numerically different was the variety of accidents present in the substance.

The issue can be presented as follows: If one interprets individuality primarily as distinction from others, or as was called by many at the time, 'difference', it appears quite obvious that the easiest way to account for such difference is to point to some feature or features which set the individual apart from other individuals. What they failed to see, however, was that individuality may not consist only, or even primarily, in difference. Individuality above everything else seems to have to do with non-instantiability. 'Difference, as later scholastics were going to see clearly, is more an accompanying feature of individuality than its defining feature.'<sup>46</sup>

#### E. The Discernibility of Individuals

Unlike the Contemporary situation, where discernibility is often given precedence in the subject, medieval authors did not regard the issue of individuality as separate from discernibility. Their metaphysical approach left this matter largely untouched.<sup>47</sup>

Like discernibility, the function of proper names and indexicals was not addressed in the Middle Ages, except by those who adopted a purely

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<sup>46</sup> Gracia, 1994. p. 270.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.270-271.

logical/grammatical approach. Abelard does distinguish between universals and what is designated by proper names. But even his discussion is limited.

Yet, again, our analysis of article 53, question 1 exhibits some hint of just this sort of concern shown by Henry. He is beginning to draw distinctions between the grammatical/linguistic implications of the terms and the metaphysical necessities for which they are said to relate.

#### F. The Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles

The metaphysical formulation is as follows:

If x has the same characteristics as y, then x is identical with y. (Metaphysical principle of identity)

If x and y are not identical, then x does not have the same characteristics as y. (translated into a more contemporary format.)

The epistemic formulation is as follows:

If x is indiscernible (or indistinguishable) from y, then x is identical with y. (epistemic because it involves the epistemic notion of indiscernibility, of which identity is the result.)

If x is indiscernible (or indistinguishable) from y, then x is the same object as y (where object is considered an epistemic entity, not a thing.) (modified for proper proportion\*)<sup>48</sup>

How medieval philosophers address these issues varies greatly between the early and later authors of the period. As philosophical positions shift away from realism and towards nominalism, we see a growing interest in the problem of individuation in its own right. “Indeed, in the thirteenth century and later we find a slow but concerted effort to distinguish individuality from numerical difference and to separate the logical notion of a subject (impredicable) and predicate (predicable) from the metaphysical notions of individual (incommunicable) and universal (communicable.)”<sup>49</sup> By the close of the twelfth century, the early medieval standard theory of individuation has all but disappeared.

The reintroduction of Aristotle to the Latin West, coupled with challenging theological demands, leads to a progressive discussion of the problem in the thirteenth century. The Aristotelian tradition, as interpreted by those who adopted that perspective, posits the aim of science in general and philosophy in particular as the identification of causes and principles. As Gracia summarizes, “to know something scientifically is to be able to identify the causes that brought it about and the principles that play a role in its makeup. Thus, to know individuality is to be able to determine the

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<sup>48</sup> Gracia, 1994. pp.274-275.

<sup>49</sup> Gracia, 1994. p.276.

causes and principles that are responsible for it.”<sup>50</sup> This is what most scholastic authors understood as the central issue concerning individuation.

As Gracia also argues, there are differences in the philosophical implications to each aspect of the problem. The first, that of the intention of individuality, is a logical one. (This has to do with the clarification of concepts, through the ability of understanding and distinguishing.) The second, third, and fourth aspects are metaphysical in nature, for they are concerned with the proper description of reality. The fifth issue, however, is epistemic, as it considers the conditions for the possibility of the discernment of individuals. Whereas, the sixth and final issue contained within this problem is conceptual. We will see in the chapters to come that Henry takes each of these six issues into account when providing his own philosophical treatment of the divine persons.

When categorized into Gracia’s framework, one can easily see with which aspects of the problem different philosophical traditions have been concerned. For example, one might read the more modern, logical positivist movement as focused little upon the metaphysical issues, but rather, as homing in on the epistemic, logical, and linguistic aspects instead. While one might point to the traditional metaphysician as having only addressed the second, third, and fourth dilemmas, while ignoring the others. When reflecting upon the problem in the High Middle Ages, most scholars have focused their attention to the treatment of the fourth issue- that of the cause or principle of the phenomenon. Gracia states that this is because “up to the fourteenth

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

century, one seldom finds a careful and clear distinction between these six issues and much more effort is put into the solution of the fourth than into the solution of the others.”<sup>51</sup>

The solution to the problem of individuation, in 13th century Scholasticism specifically, depends to a great extent on (1) the interpretation of individuality, (2) the things considered to be individual, and (3) the ontological status accorded to individuality in the individual.

If individuality is interpreted as the relation of difference or distinction among things, then the principle of individuation must consist in whatever makes individual things different or distinct from one another. But, on the other hand, if individuality is interpreted as indivisibility into units similar in nature to the original, then the principle of individuation must be what accounts for such lack of division and not necessarily for difference or distinction. If everything is individual, including the accidents of Aristotelian primary substances, such as the hair color of a man or the weight of a cat, the principles that go to make something individual would probably be different than if the term ‘individual’ extended only to primary substances. Likewise, a difference arises when physical and nonphysical entities are considered, as opposed to restricting the extension to physical entities alone. (For example, matter could be a candidate in the latter case, but would prove insufficient for the former.) And the reason for the third is

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<sup>51</sup> Gracia, 1994. p.21.

that Ontological status matters because it is one thing to account for a real feature in a thing and another to account for a concept in the mind. )<sup>52</sup>

As for Henry, we must ask- where does he fit into this historical tradition? He most certainly inherited the tradition of Boethius via Abelard. But, teaching at the time and place he did, he also represents those High Medieval thinkers who attempted to reconcile the traditional stance on individuation with the newly reintroduced issues of Aristotelianism. And so, his is a unique and interesting position in light of how he treats the term '*individuum*' in the first question of article 53 of his *Summa*.

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<sup>52</sup> Gracia, 1994. pp.2-3.

## CHAPTER 3

### HENRY'S TREATMENT OF RELATION

Aristotle began a discussion of metaphysics in ancient Greece roughly three hundred years before the Common Era. In his philosophy he understood the notion of relation as a categorical accident; an arbitrary attribute that is somehow tacked onto the substance, but not an essential part of it. As a consequence of Aristotle's analysis, the notion of relation was not of great concern in his metaphysics because it was not conceived of as having any real *necessity* for particular beings. Take, for example, the statement that 'Socrates is as white as Plato'. If the more Aristotelian notion of relation were applied to this statement, then the fact that Socrates is 'as white as' Plato has nothing to do with the substance of Socrates but is a merely accidental attribute. If, for example, Socrates were to have been born lighter than Plato, his substance, namely being a rational animal, would be no different.

Medieval theories of relation are less well known than ancient ones. What happened in the medieval universities when Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was re-introduced to the Latin West? At this point thinkers in the Latin West became acutely aware of Aristotle's notion of relation and many thinkers in the Faculty of Arts quickly embraced all of Aristotle's ideas. But not every thinker simply accepted Aristotle's analyses without critique.

Henry was regent master in the theology faculty in Paris from 1276 to his death in 1293, and of course, much of his analysis of relation is driven by his religious concerns, but one can and must distinguish the admittedly theological issues which prompted Henry's analyses from his theory of relation, which is decidedly philosophical and surprisingly "modern."

Metaphysics applies, according to Aristotle himself, to all beings. For Henry, a Christian theologian in the Augustinian tradition, God is a triune being in unity, and beings can be either created or uncreated, but according to Henry what Aristotle maintains about relation does not adequately account for a triune God in unity and for uncreated being. Consequently, Henry attempts to modify the Aristotelian metaphysical notion of relation, and in turn, that modification becomes a catalyst for the development of his own unique metaphysics; a metaphysics which would serve as a "worthy alternative to Thomism"<sup>53</sup> during his time and a significant contribution to the ongoing philosophical conversation on *esse* for years to follow.

To provide a coherent discussion of Henry's modification of the Aristotelian conception of relation, this section will address (I.) Aristotle's notion of relation, (II.) the medieval context, (III.) the reasons Henry attempts to modify Aristotle's notion of relation, and (IV.) Henry's own analysis of the term "relation", especially where it applies to the Trinity.

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<sup>53</sup> J.C. FLORES. *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity*, p.6.

## Aristotelian Metaphysics

Aristotle deals with the notion of relation in three different books: The *Categories*, *The Metaphysics*, and *The Physics*. As mentioned in the introduction, Aristotle claimed that metaphysics should apply to all beings. A critical aspect of his metaphysical system is his notion of the categorical accidents, tools used to classify beings. These categories are coincidental attributes 'inhering in' a substance or *esse*, or being, as foundation. These accidents, according to Aristotle, are distinct from the substance of a thing, and are additional aspects of generation and corruption.

Because categorical relations are dependent upon other categories as their foundation and because the relation of a thing does not necessarily determine the nature of that thing, Aristotle places relation as the least of all extra-mental realities (*summa genera/ ens debilissimum*). For example, if a person were to say that "Socrates is more white than Plato", what would that statement actually imply? Is the substance of either Socrates or Plato necessarily impacted by the relationship "more white than" which is outside of the mind? If Socrates gets a tan, Plato would then become whiter than Socrates. However, the essence of neither would be changed and Plato, in this example, has not changed at all. This obvious uncertainty is difficult in a system which seeks universals, and one can understand the reason Aristotle may have wished to subordinate the notion in some way. His hierarchical description of categories implies that substantial being is more fundamental than qualitative or quantitative being and

anything 'accidental'. Thus, for Aristotle's metaphysical structure, relation could never work as a central point of importance.

In *Metaphysics*, Book V, c.15, (a chapter Mark Henninger refers to as "a lexicon of philosophical terms"), Aristotle lays out his highly nuanced threefold division of relation as an accident. He divides the category of relation into 1) numerical relations of identity ('as white as', 'twice as much as'), 2) causal relations ('cutting-cut', 'acting-acted upon'), and 3) psychological relations ('knowing subject-object known', 'measure-measured thing').

In the first case, that of identity, the basis of the relation is unity or plurality (as pertaining to substance, quality, or quantity) and is a numerical relation between two extremes. Therefore, most medieval thinkers viewed this subdivision of relation as real and mutual.

The second subdivision, causal relation, was also interpreted as real and mutual because the two extremes belong to different categories but the same categorical ordo. The basis for this case is active or passive potency.

The third category, the psychological, is perhaps the most complex. This relation is unlike the first two types of relations, in that it is non-mutual and only real in one of the two extremes, because the extremes belong to different categorical ordo. This implies that, in this third case, dependency as a result of the relation may apply to only one of the two extremes.

In the *Physics*, Book V, ch.2, Aristotle maintains that there is no “motion in respect of relation: for it may happen that when one correlative changes, the other, although this does not itself change, is no longer applicable, so that in these cases the motion is accidental.” For example, suppose that at t1 Socrates is taller than Plato. Then at t2 Plato becomes as tall as Socrates. By t3, Plato is taller than Socrates. This change in the relation between Socrates and Plato is not motion, but rather, the results of generation and corruption. This claim is not surprising, considering Aristotle’s ordering principle of kinesis, or motion. When Aristotle maintains that there can be ‘no motion in respect to relation’, this caused no problem with his theory of an Unmoved Mover because motion requires contraries existing on a scale within one single immovable being.

In the *Categories*, ch.7, Aristotle distinguishes relation from the other categories, chiefly substance, quality, and quantity. It is important to keep in mind here that his agenda is to characterize relations on a semantic/logical level . He seems to maintain that no substance can ever be relative. (“Those things are called relative, which, being either said to be of something else or related to something else, are explained by reference to that other thing.” ) Aristotle goes on to provide two additional definitions. The first is that “those things only are properly called relative in case of which relation to an external object is a necessary condition of existence” and the second is that “we call that a relative in the case of which relation to something is a necessary condition of existence.”

This may seem to be a puzzling understanding of relation to the modern reader, because the term has developed into being thought of as residing between two substances. However, for Aristotle (as well as medieval thinkers), the accidental category is understood to be an item that inheres within a particular given substance as an extra-mental reality (opposed to a relation of reason). Medieval philosophers seem to share this understanding in a strict way. For every distinct substance, there must be a distinct set of accidents. For Aristotle, this is being-towards-something (*ta pros ti*; Latin equivalent, *esse ad aliquid*, or accidental being).

Aristotle's logical definition of relation is in reference to another thing, the "ad aliquid". This implies that it may contain contraries (virtue and vice), variation of degree (like and unlike), and simultaneous correlatives. His ontological definition implies that relation is a necessary condition of existence.

Although Aristotle's notion of relation may seem complex, it is simple in comparison to the discussion concerning relation that would follow him in the High Middle Ages. In proportion to the subjects of his writing, Aristotle devotes very little space to relation. But, he devotes enough to ignite a spark. That spark was re-introduced to the thinkers of the Latin West at a very interesting time.

### The Need for Modification

The discussion of the medieval conversation of *relatio*, relation, requires context. Thinkers in the Middle Ages understood Aristotle in a certain way, through the lens of interpretation. That interpretation must be understood before one can fully grasp the

authority it was given. Added to that is the environment in which this interpretation was being analyzed. These thinkers were not only interpreting Aristotle; they were interpreting him in the context of a culture on the brink of enormous change.

During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, Christian theologians were struggling with the arrival of Aristotelian philosophy, which had been reintroduced to the Latin West by Muslim scholars.<sup>54</sup> At this point, two major events were happening in the West. On one hand, the rise of the Catholic Church was calling for a solidification of Christian doctrine including an accepted understanding of a monotheistic, yet triune, God. On the other hand, the rise of the universities produced scholars who were calling for a more thorough study of secular philosophical texts to supplement the previously studied texts of the Bible and Peter Lombard's books on the *Sentences*<sup>55</sup>.

So, for Henry of Ghent, a secular master of theology teaching at the university in Paris from around 1276 to 1293 (and writing theology for the Catholic Church)<sup>56</sup>, the challenge became to "...address in a manner congenial to reason *and* revelation the non-Christian philosophy, particularly Aristotle and his commentators."<sup>57</sup> This task, although complex, is representative of a shift taking place in religious and philosophic scholasticism. Henry, along with his contemporaries, could have ignored the

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<sup>54</sup> Medieval philosophers, when mentioning Aristotle, often refer to 'the Philosopher and his Commentator.' Generally, the Commentator referred to is Averroes. (Boethius also wrote commentaries on Aristotle; there were also Greek commentaries on his works; and Grosseteste and other anonymous commentaries on Aristotle's *Ethics* also circulated in the Middle Ages.)

<sup>55</sup> Lombard's book on the *Sentences* became the main teaching text for Theology.

<sup>56</sup> Henry of Ghent (appointed by the Bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier) sat on the commission for the Condemnation of 1277 (March 7<sup>th</sup>), in which the bishop of Paris condemned two hundred and twenty philosophical positions.

<sup>57</sup> J.C. FLORES, *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity*, p.2.

Aristotelian writings and structured a metaphysics that would fit neatly into the spiritual *status quo*, rather than trying to account for both. Instead, the philosophical conversation attempted reconciliation.

Aristotle's notion of relation seemed inadequate for medieval thinkers committed to certain religious beliefs. Specifically, there were difficulties with (1) Aristotle's belief that relation was an accident, (2) the fact that Aristotle's account of relation seemed to deny any special providence by God, and (3) Aristotle's unmoved mover was necessitarian. It was not a free Creator.<sup>58</sup>

(1) Henry felt that Aristotle's notion of relation was inadequate in accounting for uncreated beings because in Aristotle's system relation is an 'accident.' As a metaphysical category, relation must apply to all beings (both created and uncreated). As an accident, relation implies contingency. For a Christian theologian like Henry, there is obviously a relational aspect to the Trinity (God the Father and God the Son).<sup>59</sup> But

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<sup>58</sup> Divine simplicity is part of a well-established tradition in the Middle Ages. An issue for Christian, Jewish, and Islamic thinkers alike, it has ancient roots. When the Platonic notion of divine transcendence was inherited alongside the Aristotelian notion of God as a fully actualized intellect, the result was a Medieval conception of the divine as pure and unlimited being. For thinkers like Avicenna and Maimonides this purity implied an absolute unity which excludes the possibility of internal divisions. When Avicenna states "It is not possible that the true nature whose existence is necessary be composed of a multitude at all..." (Avicenna 1973) he is referring to the divine as the only essence that is necessarily one with existence and can have nothing superadded to it. Maimonides, in a similar manner, conceives of God as a subject about whom we can predicate nothing. "He, may he be exalted, is one in all respects; no multiplicity should be posited in Him..." (Maimonides 1963) Predication imposes limitation upon a subject, by implying that the subject is one thing or another, and thus cannot be properly applied to God. The divine, then, necessarily lacks accidents/attributes. (Pessin 2016)

<sup>59</sup> "According to Christian doctrine of the Trinity, God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As this doctrine was typically understood during the Middle Ages, it implied not only that God possesses certain relations—such as fatherhood and sonship—but also that he possess them independently of the activity of any mind. As Aquinas says in his *Summa Theologiae*: Someone is said to be a father only by

the relations “son of” and “father of” are not accidents for the Christian Trinitarian. The Trinity cannot contain contingency, as this would be to imply an imperfection in God which is unworthy of him<sup>60</sup>.

The medieval doctrine of divine simplicity argues for the understanding that any relation between God and his intrinsic or essential attributes would need to be necessary and not contingent, because there is no real distinction to be drawn between God and any of his intrinsic or essential attributes. God is simple. God’s attributes should not be understood as a pie-chart, having compartmentalized aspects. Augustine points out in book V of his *De Trinitate* that there arises a special difficulty for those who want to combine this understanding with the Christian doctrine of creation. For this doctrine would seem to require that God first lacks, and then acquires a contingent or accidental relation—namely, that of being creator.<sup>61</sup>

If *relatio* (relation) implies contingency and imperfection is an accident, and if one believes in an uncreated being outside of the realm of accidents which has an essential relation built into it (a triune God), then how can a metaphysics be structured? Henry’s solution to this question aims at the ‘accidental’ part of Aristotle’s theory. Although this is an important problem Henry needed to address, it is not the only one.

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virtue of his fatherhood, and someone is said to be a son only by virtue of his sonship. Therefore, if [the relations of] fatherhood and sonship are not really in God, it follows that God is not a Father or Son really, but merely according to a concept of the mind- which is the Sabellian heresy.” [Stanford Encyclopedia.edu](https://www.encyclopedia.edu).  
<sup>60</sup> HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, art.32, q.5: “*Sed hoc ignobilitatis est, et tale, ut habitum est supra, maxime Deo repugnant. Ergo etc.*”

<sup>61</sup> Translations of Augustine have been taken from two sources: M.T. CLARK. “*De Trinitate*.” The Cambridge Companion to Augustine, and A. W. HADDAN. *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.

(2) If Aristotle is correct, God's special providence is also questionable, if not impossible. Aristotle believed that beings are substances. According to his own notion of relation (aside from the consequences of an accidental attribute), the primary substance could not be related to this world at all, because this would expose the primary substance to generation and corruption. If applied to the Christian God, that would imply that God, the primary being, could have no knowledge of the lives of his creatures and God's providence could not be accounted for. Furthermore, God would not be able to intervene in the affairs of this world.

This would eliminate the ability for miracles and personal relationships with the divine. Henry would not have been comfortable with this, because he saw the nature of God as a twofold self-recognition through divine intelligence (thought) and divine will (love), which implies awareness. The Christian God is not only aware of the lives of his creatures, but also engaged with them through prayer and sacrifice. In fact, according to Henry, the existence of creatures depends on an exemplar, or idea, in the mind of God. For Henry, humans are reflections of God, and thus, are very much related in that regard.

(3) This develops into another problem which Henry finds in Aristotle's notion of relation: the problem of God's creation as necessary. (This is a different concern than in the first problem, which was a Trinitarian concern.) This is a problem Henry found in not only Aristotle, but also Latin Averroism.<sup>62</sup> Henry maintains 1) the Trinity is a triune, yet

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<sup>62</sup> Unlike Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, Henry was hesitant of the quick acceptance of Latin Averroism by his colleagues, especially on the point of necessity. The idea that creation implied necessity

monotheistic, divinity that is not capable of containing contingent attributes, yet encompasses real relations between three distinct persons, and 2) creation is the spiritual action of a knowing and loving God who is aware of his creatures without being essentially changed by them (as addressed in the previous paragraph). These create a need in his thought for further distinctions of real relations that will allow for a difference applied to each extreme<sup>63</sup> involved in the relation.

Basically, Henry needs creatures to be reflections of and thus dependent upon God, but he needs God to be independent from the contingency of his creatures. God cannot be altered by the act of creation. Nor does Henry believe that creatures are necessary beings; God, and even God as creator, is not dependent on creatures. According to Aristotle, two extremes or *relata* are needed to establish a relation. So, to claim that “a is related to b” (aRb) where “a” and “b” are the terms or extremes that establish a relationship “R”, the relation needs both extremes. If “Socrates is the father of Plato”, the relation “is father of” needs both terms or extremes; i.e. both Socrates and Plato. But, to claim that “God is the creator of humans”, Henry wants to avoid claiming that the relation “is creator of” *requires* humans. For Henry, God is completely free in creating humans.

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to God was condemned not only in 1277, but also earlier, in 1270. In the earlier condemnation, also carried out by Tempier, thirteen averroistic propositions were considered to be erroneous; including the proposition that God does not know individual things, there never was a first man, and human affairs are not regulated by the Providence of God. The Condemnation of 1277 furthered the attacks on Latin Averroism: proposition #22. that God cannot be the cause of a newly made thing and cannot produce anything new; #28. that from one first agent there cannot proceed a multiplicity of effects, #20. that God of necessity makes whatever comes immediately from Him. (HYMAN & WALSH, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions*, pp.584-591).

<sup>63</sup> Note that ‘extreme’ refers to the distinguished terms. Here the extremes are God and his created beings.

Henry's theological concerns do not fit into the systematic approach of Aristotle as is. When addressing Henry's criticism of Aristotle and Averroes, Flores points out that to Henry, "these thinkers ground their conclusions in their observation of nature. Accordingly, they envision generation solely in terms of natural change and the will solely as a principle of acting and making. Thus, they failed to see how there can be a communication of nature by intellect and will."<sup>64</sup> Thus, a modification is needed.

### Henry's Discussion of Relation

How does Henry suggest we should think about the notion of relation, if it is different from Aristotle's notion? According to available scholarly editions, Henry first addresses the notion of relation in *Quodlibet* III, question 4, in the year 1278<sup>65</sup>. (Notice that this is one year after he participated in the Condemnation of 1277. Henry has just spent a considerable amount of time engaged in Aristotle's writings, and has certainly devoted time to finding limits with reference to theology in his thought.)

In this question Henry discusses Avicenna's argument that different modes of being can be combined, so that substantial being could be combined with relational being and accidental being. Because relation becomes so important in his system, Henry deals with it in many different places. The primary discussion of relation seems to be in his *Summa*, article 32, question 5, c.1279-80.<sup>66</sup> However, aspects can also be

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<sup>64</sup> J.C. FLORES, *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity*, p.132.

<sup>65</sup> J. DECORTE, *Avicenna's Ontology of Relation*, p.9. Cf. HENRICI DE GANDAVO, *Quod. III*, q.4 (ed. 1518, f. 51rN). See also Decorte, *Avicenna's Ontology of Relation*, p.11, n.38.

<sup>66</sup> The *Summa* is divided by articles containing questions. The *Quodlibeta* are divided by question.

seen throughout his *Quodlibeta*<sup>67</sup>. However, before discussing that particular text, an examination of Henry's overall metaphysics is needed. Henry's analysis of relation is articulated through a web of very technical terms, each of which will be addressed separately below. Considering this discussion, the problems examined in section III (Henry's problems with the Aristotelian notion) will be revisited.

As mentioned previously, Henry modifies Aristotle's notion of relation, making relation a central aspect of his thought. His notion of relation resides within a very complex understanding of *esse*. Henry uses five terms when discussing relation. These are: (1) *res* ('thing'), (2) *fundamentum* ('base'), (3) *modus* ('mode'), (4) *respectus* ('respect'), and (5) *ratio* ('notion'). Each of these five terms have very technical meanings and each must be understood.

#### 1. *Res*

In the process of constructing a metaphysical system, Henry begins by thinking of reality in the very broadest sense possible. *Res*, or thing, is this starting point for Henry<sup>68</sup>. *Res* is the most fundamental metaphysical category that contains all others<sup>69</sup>. The broadest sense of *res* is only opposed to that which is pure nothing (*purum nihil*). From this fundamental category of *res*/thing there are three subcategories, having a common center.

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<sup>67</sup> For a list of these teachings, see Henninger, p.42, n.5.

<sup>68</sup> S. P. MARRONE, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge*. pp.108-110.

<sup>69</sup> Henry draws out his ideas on the categories in *Summa*, art.32, q.5; *Quod. V*, q.2; *Quod.VII*, q.1-2.

The first, broadest field is the category itself: that which could have being (*ens*) and that which could not have being (*non ens*). Henry refers to this category as '*res a reor reris*' because of his assumption that the term derived etymologically from *reor, reris* "to think." In *Quodlibet VII*, questions 1 and 2, Henry gives the example of a "golden mountain"<sup>70</sup>. One could conceptualize of a golden mountain, because one has experienced gold and one has experienced mountains, even though those concepts would never join as an actualized being. (Aristotle's example of this same issue concerns a "goat-stag."<sup>71</sup>) This category is *esse* as an imaginary concept.

The second, more restricted field than the first, consists of 'things' that *could* have actual existence in the world. Henry refers to this category as '*res a ratitudine*'. *Ratitudine* etymologically refers to *ratitudo*, "rational thought." The being of this category either possesses or relates to an exemplar in the mind of God, which is the origin of all creation. This category is *esse* as essence.

The third, most restricted field of the three consists only of those things which *do* have actual existence in the world. This category is referred to as '*res existens in actu*'. '*Res existens in actu*', then, is *esse* as existence.<sup>72</sup> The '*res*' of this category includes all the unique characteristics and accidents of the individuated being.

Take for example the statement 'Socrates is the father of Plato.' Henry believes the *res* of this statement to be the actual existing beings of Socrates and Plato as

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<sup>70</sup> HENRY OF GHENT, *Quod. VII*, qq. 1 and 2 (I, 258rB).

<sup>71</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Posterior Analytics*, II, 7.

<sup>72</sup> For other equally useful discussions of '*res*' in Henry's thought, see Flores, p.165, n. 44; pp.181-184 and Henninger, p.43-44; 48-52.

individuals (including all the qualities and quantities that make them distinctly themselves). It is the idea of 'this man' and 'this man' directly.

## 2. *Fundamentum*

At this point, Henry has distinguished between essence (*essentia*) and existence (*existens*). Henry's next task of modification is to address the issue of foundation, or base (*fundamentum*). This is a very important yet very complicated issue for his metaphysics.

The fundament is understood by Henry as the qualities or quantities upon which any particular relation is founded; so that something may be white (an accident, namely, a quality) *and* in addition, it may be similar to another white thing (a relation). In the statement 'Socrates is *as white as* Plato', the 'as white as' is the relation. But, if there are no white things except for Socrates, then, for Henry, the fundament, i.e. white, still exists *even though* the relation 'as white as' does not. (This is a point on which Scotus heavily criticizes Henry.<sup>73</sup>)

## 3. *Modus*

The concepts of 'thing' and 'foundation' lead into Henry's use of mode (*modus*) which concerns actual existence. Instead of asking whether the diverse *res* of different categories can be transferred to God, Henry asks whether the "modes" of being of the

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<sup>73</sup> See J. Decortes' article, *Modus or Res: Scotus' Criticism of Henry of Ghent's Conception of the Reality of a Real Relation* for a further discussion of Scotus' criticism.

different categories can be attributed to God.<sup>74</sup> Thus, mode of being becomes a crucial tenet within the metaphysics of Henry's thought. In fact, in his book on *Relations*, Mark Henninger entitles his chapter about Henry: 'Relation as Mode of Being.'<sup>75</sup>

Henry's emphasis upon modal distinction cannot be overstated. J. Decorte demonstrates this significance in the conclusion of his article on Henry's metaphysical notions of relation and substance by saying that "since all creation is dependent upon a Creator, and since that Creator is a tri-unity, all creation and the Creator are in an eminent way relational. Relatedness is a mode of being of all that is; indeed, it is the primary mode of being of all that is. Hence, no metaphysics can do without relation."<sup>76</sup> One is reminded of Hegel, who claimed that one cannot define being without the notion of relation.

In the statement "God is the creator of Plato", the phrase "is creator of" is really expressing a mode of being. With a mode of being, *relata* or the extremes (in this case, God and Plato) are not both needed to establish the relation "is creator of" because in this example, Plato is not required for God to be a creator. God, in Henry's thought, is not dependent on creatures. Mode may be best understood when discussed along with respect (*respectus*).

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<sup>74</sup> HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, article 32, question 5.

<sup>75</sup> M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, c.3.

<sup>76</sup> J. DECORTE, *Modus or Res*, p.21.

#### 4. *Respectus*

Juan Carlos Flores describes Henry's notion of respect by contrasting it with that of relation:

*"...even though both relation and respect signify 'being toward another' (ad aliud esse), the relative name (relation) 'father' can be predicated of that to which it is related, while the respective name (respectus) 'paternity' cannot be predicated of that to which it is related. A father is the father of the son, but his paternity is not the paternity of the filiation. Thus, respectus signifies, strictly speaking, relatedness toward something, regardless of whether the name bespeaks the foundation as well (as some names of respectus do). Only if the respectus is also a name of the foundation related as well as of its relatedness can the respectus be called relatio."<sup>77</sup>*

In this example 'paternity' is the *respectus*, which is different from the relation 'is father of...' To illustrate this further, one can carry this example out and apply it to a situation of multiple siblings. The relation "is father of" establishes the "*respectus*" with the first child, but once established by the first child, subsequent children do not add additional "respects". And furthermore, should any of the multiple children pass out of actual existence, the "*respectus*" would remain unaltered.

In his discussion of this same subject matter, Jos Decorte claims that "Using the name *relatio* in a proper sense, however, we can no longer say that both (*relatio* and *respectus*) can be used interchangeably: for although every *relatio* is a *respectus*, not every *respectus* is a *relatio*."<sup>78</sup> With regards to the above distinction between 'paternity' and 'fatherhood', Decorte cites Henry's *Summa*, article 35: "Whereas 'father' is both

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<sup>77</sup> J.C. FLORES, *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity* p.163.

<sup>78</sup> J. DECORTE, *Modus or Res*, p.4.

*relatio* and *respectus*, ‘fatherhood’ is *respectus* and, strictly speaking, not *relatio*.<sup>79</sup>

Returning to the example given above about Socrates and Plato, ‘Socrates is the father of Plato’ the *respectus* of Socrates would be his paternity-ness and the *respectus* of Plato would be his filiation-ness.

## 5. *Ratio*

The mode of existing of participated being<sup>80</sup> is considered the *ratio* (notional concept<sup>81</sup>, essential concept, definition). As opposed to *res*, which is the material principle of each category of reality, *ratio* is the formal principle of each category. The mode of existing of the divine is found as the self-act of knowing and loving; this is God’s *ratio*, or notional concept. But existing created beings also have a *ratio*. So that, if ‘Socrates is the father of Plato’, the *ratio*, for Henry, would be the concept of Socrates and the concept of Plato.

These five notions are critical to place Henry’s notion of relation within a coherent context. As has been demonstrated, his notion of relation is not an isolated one, but is a notion working in conjunction with his other metaphysical notions so that his system can solve the problems needed to be addressed by him.

### IVb. *Resolving Problems from Section III*

In light of understanding Henry’s system, let us now revisit the three problems mentioned earlier that Henry found within Aristotle’s notion of relation.

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<sup>79</sup> J. DECORTE, *Modus or Res*; p.5 (See n. 19).

<sup>80</sup> M. HENNINGER, *Relation*, p.48 (See n. 25, regarding *Quod. V*, q.2).

<sup>81</sup> If notion is correct, nature is implied.

(1.) Relation as an accident By building his metaphysics in such a way that relation becomes essential to being, rather than accidental, Henry's notion of relation can handle the problem which his Trinitarian beliefs posed for Aristotle's analysis of relation. If relation is within being rather than tacked onto it as an accident, the relation of father and son within the Trinity does not imply any accidental attribute tacked onto God.

According to Henry, the Father generates first in the mode of intellect and is thus un-generated, while the Son proceeds as the Word of the intellect and the Holy Spirit as Love out of the will.<sup>82</sup> Consequently, through this conversation between the divine intellect and the divine will, God is aware of himself as thought (through the Son) and loving that knowledge (through the Holy Spirit). But, because these persons are still within the one God, they are distinct, not separate. Thus, by creatively uniting the two most common methods for understanding the Trinity into a form of self-reflection, Henry establishes a Trinity of eternal spiritual action.

(2.) Divine Providence: In Henry's system God can have knowledge of particulars and have guidance over his creation without being corrupted because of the relational distinctions Henry has built into his system. Because God has a different mode of being, *ratio*, and *respectus* than created beings have- the relation has different implications depending on which direction it is pointing towards. Consequently, the creator and a created being may participate in a shared relationship, but one could understand the relationship as philosophically implying one thing for the creator and another thing for the created being. The one relation can have different implications for each extreme in

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<sup>82</sup> J.C. FLORES, *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity*, p.11.

the relation. This understanding allows one to conceive of a difference in necessity between the extremes of the creator/created relation: where God may be able to influence beings that are in space and time without being exposed to space and time Himself.

(3.) God's creation as necessary: Henry believes his notion has solved this problem because God exists in the mode of being as creator, whether created beings are existing in actuality or not. (See *Modus* in Section IVa) An example of Henry's philosophical concern is that the Aristotelian notion of relation, as Henry understood it, entailed that the statement 'God is creator of Plato' implies contingency to both extremes (God and Plato) participating in the relation ('is creator of').

By removing relation from the accidental category and applying the five aspects discussed in section IVa, the statement 'God is creator of Plato' may be understood differently. Within Henry's system, Plato (as an existing being) depends upon the relation. Plato must have this established relationship with God in order to 'be created'. However, God, as 'creator of', does not depend upon the established relationship with Plato. God is creator whether or not this particular relation is established.

Henry's notion of relation is discussed here, because it demonstrates a metaphysical approach to the subject of the divine. This will later be contrasted with the approach that Henry takes to the notion of person in question 1 of article 53, which is decidedly epistemic. When considering the notion of relation, we see that Henry addressed the

nature of God through the lens of essence and accident.<sup>83</sup> And although the subject matter of divine relation and the divine persons are inextricably linked, he treats the latter very differently. There, when discussing the divine persons, Henry considers the language we use to convey the meaning of persons and whether that meaning forms the proper concept in our minds for thinking about the divine. Henry's comparison of specific terms, we will see, is different in each account. In the above section of relation, we see him comparing terms to build a metaphysical account of God's triune nature. In question 1 of article 53, we will again see his consideration of specific terms, yet there, he contrasts them with the notion of person to demonstrate their fallibility in conveying the unique meaning which only the term 'persona' is able to convey. But before moving on to that discussion, let us consider the philosophical connections established thus far.

I have now demonstrated the ways in which substance and relation took on new importance for philosophers and theologians in the Middle Ages. It was suggested by Saint Basil that an understanding of the Trinity lay more in understanding the types of relation existing between the three members of the Godhead than in the nature of the Persons themselves. But in fact, for Henry, the two concepts are philosophically linked.<sup>84</sup> This is because, according to Christian doctrine, the persons of the trinity exist in relation to each other as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. So, Henry maintains

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<sup>83</sup> For further insight into the significance of Henry's notion of Relation, the Trinity, and Illumination, see Russell Friedman's work in the two volume Brill series devoted to *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University*.

<sup>84</sup> See- Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* (Blackfriars, 1967) p.30 (note); cf St. Augustine *The Trinity* (Catholic University of America Press, 1963) p.180. Wikipedia contributors, "Relation (history of concept)," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Relation\\_\(history\\_of\\_concept\)&oldid=841385111](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Relation_(history_of_concept)&oldid=841385111) (accessed May 23, 2018).

that the divine persons are relations, essentially. And like the problem of universals, the philosophical question for the Scholastics was whether relations were real or only mental.

Henry treats relation as a real feature of the divine. (Albeit introducing distinctions between the reality of the being and our understanding of it.) We should expect, then, that Henry will offer his own solution pertaining to personhood. As we will see, what separates the divine persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while maintaining the divine unity of the Godhead, Henry argues, is a triune nature of incommunicability. The Father is a person in relationship with himself as Father to the Son and distinct from the Son by virtue of an incommunicability. Incommunicability, an essence of unutterable being, suggests a relation of communication. Some aspect of the Father's nature is incommunicable to the Son, and vice versa. They are whole as one relation. They are distinct as the persons in the relationship. Thus, one might assume Henry would treat both relation and personhood with similar ontological status. We will see that he does.

A thorough accounting of his framework should provide insight into the following questions: Are universals and relations real, or mental/verbal constructs? Does the term 'person' signify something real, or something in the mind alone? And, how do each of these terms refer to created and uncreated beings? We will revisit these questions after the exegesis and analysis of Article 53, question 1.

## CHAPTER 4

### AN EXEGESIS OF SUMMA, ARTICLE 53, QUESTION 1

Article 53 of Henry's *Summa* contains the secular master's teachings 'On Those Things That Pertain to the Distinction of the Persons'. Henry opens this section with a reflection on the articles before it and offers his reader an explanation of why he organizes the following discussion in the manner which he does.

*"Since thus far we have dealt with those things that in God pertain to the common substance, there remains that we thereafter deal with those attributes that pertain to the distinction of the persons. And we must do this first with those that pertain to those that are proper and secondly with those that pertain to those that are appropriated. And with regard to those that are proper we must first deal with those that pertain to the individual persons by themselves and secondly with those that belong to them in relation to one another. And with regard to those that belong to the individual persons by themselves, we must first deal with them in general, but secondly in particular. And in general, we must first deal with the persons, secondly with the properties of the persons that are commonly called notions."*<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *"Praetractato hucusque de his quae in Deo pertinent ad communem substantiam, deinceps restat tractandum de illis quae pertinent ad personarum distinctionem. Et hoc primo de eis quae pertinent ad propria; secundo de eis quae pertinent ad appropriata. Et circa propria, primo de eis quae conveniunt singulis personis secundum se; secundo de eis quae conveniunt ipsis ad invicem comparatis. Et de illis quae conveniunt singulis secundum se, primo in generali, secundo vero in speciali. Et in generali, primo de ipsis personis, secundo de proprietatibus personarum quae communiter notiones dicuntur."* *Summa*, LIII, P1, 3-11. [60r, 1.]

With regard to divine persons, Henry maintains, two overarching questions need to be asked. First, he insists that one must formulate an answer concerning the manner of being (of the persons) in God. And only after that should one progress to a solution concerning the manner of the one person's emanating from another.

To the first, he addresses ten questions concerning personhood/ the divine persons. Henry first asks (1) whether it is necessary to hold that there is a person in God. He goes on to inquire (2) whether, in God, 'person' has being in a proper or transferred sense, (3) whether 'person' has being in God and in creatures univocally and with the same character, (4) whether 'person' has being according to substance or to relation, and (5) whether in God, 'person' signifies a thing or an intention. He then asks (6) whether an absolute supposite has being in God and (7) whether 'person' signifies something common in God. After inquiring about (8) whether or not many persons must be held to be in God, Henry asks (9) whether there are only two persons in God or some other number. And, finally, he responds to the question of (10) whether, in God, one person is in another mutually or in the same way.

One can understand, given the traditional problems of individuation he has inherited, why he frames the discussion in these terms, and specifically in this order. To distinguish between persons in the divine, he draws his focus to the metaphysical nature of the divine persons. My interest begins with his first question, for it is here that Henry lays out his own unique account of personhood, in terms of eight specific components, and it is this categorization, when taken in context with the larger

treatment contained in this article, that exhibits Henry's original epistemic considerations.

Question 1 of article 53 contains Henry's response to 'Whether it is necessary to hold that there is a person in God'. (*Utrum Sit Ponere Personam Esse In Deo.*) In standard scholastic format, he begins with possible objections to, or reasons for rejecting, the notion of divine persons. He references Boethius' definition, and the problematic implications of focusing on a 'rational nature' and 'individual substance.'<sup>86</sup> Henry maintains that the divine has an intellectual nature rather than a rational one. Furthermore, one cannot describe God as an individual substance, since that implies a universal capable of being individuated, which is not the case with God. (See discussion above.)

His second objection derives from the writings of Augustine in book five of *On The Trinity*. There, the nature of divine persons is explained as something said for mere convenience of thought. That is, person was employed as a way to talk about the divine rather than remaining silent. But critics suggested that had little to do with the divine nature itself, and merely demonstrated some fact about human limitations.<sup>87</sup> This, of course, will not suffice since Henry wants to maintain the divine persons as necessary due to the divine nature, not just convenience of conversation. So, he offers Richard of

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<sup>86</sup> *In Deo autem non est natura rationalis, sed potius intellectualis, neque substantia individual, quia non est individuum nisi ubi est universal individuabile, quod non est in Deo, ut habitum est supra.* (Q1, p.1, lines 6-9)

<sup>87</sup> *Sed si persona esset in Deo, dictum esset tres personae, ut non taceretur, sed ut existens in Deo diceretur et exprimeretur sicut est.* (Q1, par.2, lines 11-13.)

St. Victor as a contrary, and more appropriate, viewpoint because it accounts for the incommunicable nature of the divine and allows for a unity of substance despite that plurality of personhood.<sup>88</sup> Henry compares the incommunicable nature of the divine persons to the property of generation between the Father and Son. Later he will argue that the property of the Father, by which he communicates his essence to the son, is also incommunicable.<sup>89</sup>

In the process of introducing these objections, Henry has presented three possible meanings for the term ‘person.’

Definition 1 (From Boethius): A person is an individual substance of a rational nature.

‘persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia.’<sup>90</sup>

Definition 2 (From Augustine): A person is that which is said so as not to remain silent.

‘Dictum est tres personae, non ut illud diceretur sed ne omnino taceretur.’<sup>91</sup>

Definition 3 (From Richard of St. Victor): A person is an existence found to have something one and incommunicable.

‘Existencia divina si vel unum aliquid invenitur habere incommunicabile, ex eo solo depraehenditur atque convincitur esse persona.’<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> ...quia aut nihil est communicabile in Deo, aut si aliquid communicatur in eo, proprietates communicantis in quantum communicat non potest communicari ei cui communicatur... (Q1, par.3, lines 17-20)

<sup>89</sup> See below, q.10, par.37.

<sup>90</sup> Boethius, *Against Eutyches and Nestorius* 3; ed. C. Moreschini, p. 214; PL64: 1342C-D. (LIII, Q1, P1,5-6.)

<sup>91</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity* 5, 9; ed. W. Mountain-F. Glorie; CC 59, 217; PL: 42: 918. (LIII, Q1, P2,10-11.)

<sup>92</sup> Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 5, 1; ed. J. Ribailier, p. 195; PL: 196: 949A. (LIII, Q1, P3,15-16.)

### *Solutio* (The Resolution of the Question)

Henry resolves that one must hold ‘absolutely and without qualification’ that there is a person in God, after determining that one must attribute to God only that which is ‘without qualification more worthy and better to be than not to be’. This point is attributed to *On the Faith* by Ambrose, and Henry maintains that it applies to the divine personal and essential qualities alike.<sup>93</sup>

### *De Significatione Octo Terminorum* (On the Meaning of the Eight Terms)

It is at this point that Henry provides his own account ‘On the Meaning of the Eight Terms’. The terms are “individual,” “this something,” “singular,” “natural thing,” “subsistence,” “substance,” “supposite,” and “person.” These names, as he calls them, constitute his theory of personhood. According to Henry they ‘represent and signify almost the same thing with regard to the nature and essence of a natural thing, when nature is taken in a very broad sense.’<sup>94</sup> An example of this arises when describing a human person. His task, then, is to determine whether they behave similarly when applied to the divine persons. Do all eight terms, when applied to the divine nature, represent and signify the same thing? Let us remember Henry’s inquiry into the notion of relation, where he invokes Aristotle’s determination that metaphysical statements must apply to all beings. A similar point is in play here. Henry cites a claim made by Boethius in *On the Two Natures*, that “If one wants to say ‘nature’ of all natural things,

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<sup>93</sup> ...*quae provenit ex perfectione eius qui habet in se id quod alteri non potest communicari secundum quod dicitur persona, secundum quod infra videbitur.* (Q1, par.4, lines 34-36.) (\*See below, q.5, par. 26, 33, and 34.)

<sup>94</sup> See Par.5.

such a definition will be given that can include all the things that exist...that, since they exist, can somehow be grasped by the intellect.”<sup>95</sup> As we will see, Henry argues that the eight terms do not, in fact, apply equally to the divine persons as they do with other natural things. He considers them now, one by one, in this framework.

### *Individuum*

The definition of a nature must define substances and those accidents applied to them. While the first two terms (“individual” and “this something”) are found in the essence of a creature in both substance and accidents, they are not applicable to the uncreated essence or God. Again, Henry discussed the problem with individuation. Since “individual” has its contrary “non-individual” it becomes problematic when attributed to God, because these terms imply a universal. An individual (in character or intention), as he understands it, is only something really particular or singular if individuated under something really universal.<sup>96</sup> But God is not an individual under a universal.

Because, in God, ‘it is not possible in accord with what has been determined to find the character of a real universal or particular,’ it would not be possible to find the character of an individual except by extending the name ‘individual’ to the character of

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<sup>95</sup> Boethius, *Liber contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, cap.1 (ed. C. Moreschini, p.209, 63-65: *Nam si de omnibus rebus naturam dici placet, talis definitio dabitur quae res omnes quae sunt possit includere. Erit ergo huiusmodi: “natura est earum rerum quae, cum sint, quoquo modo intellectu capi possunt”*”, PL 64, 1341B).

<sup>96</sup> *“Individuum enim ex opposito distinguitur contra dividuum. Non est autem dividuum nisi re universale, neque ratio sive intentio dividui nisi circa universale secundum rem. Quare neque individuum est nisi re particulare sive singulare sub universali individuum...”* (Q1, par.5, lines 53-57.)

the singular.<sup>97</sup> This is why, Henry claims, the *Decretals* refer to the Holy Trinity as “individual according to the common essence, but separate in accord with the personal properties.”<sup>98</sup> Henry extends the use of ‘separate’ to imply ‘distinct.’<sup>99</sup> While separation is not found in the divine, distinction is. For this reason, Henry distinguishes between essence and natural thing/individual. ‘So that,’ he suggests, ‘a natural thing is properly said to be an individual, but a nature is said to be the essence of a thing whether in itself or as individuated in a suppositum.’<sup>100</sup>

Because Henry’s notion of individuation is so closely related to his notion of personhood, I treat it in further detail as a preface to section 8 on the term ‘person.’ For the sake of practicality, however, let us understand ‘individual’ as generally referring to an individual entity or instance as distinguished from a group of other entities/instances.

### *Hoc Aliquid*

At first glance, the terms ‘individual’ and ‘this something’ may appear to have the same linguistic function and meaning. In other words, they seem to name/point to the same entities in the world and in our minds. Henry demonstrates, however, that this is not the case. He draws a distinction between the two, stating that while both terms do point to the same thing in reality (the utterance of ‘individual’ and ‘this something’ both designate the same object in the world), they differ from one another in meaning

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<sup>97</sup>SLIII, Q.1, par. 6.

<sup>98</sup> Gregory IX, *Decretals* 1, 1, 1; ed. Ae. Friedberg, 2, p.5.

<sup>99</sup> “Discretio enim non est proprie in divinis personis, sed disinctio.” (LIII, Q1, p6,66-67.)

<sup>100</sup> See term sections 7 & 8 for continued discussion of ‘*individuum*.’ (p.62 of this dissertation.)

and signify differently or point to different concepts/notions in the mind- in relation to the object in the world.

Each term has in common the idea of some part, understood as standing under some whole which is divided by negation. They differ in how they accomplish this. The term 'individual' is said in order to signify the character of an entity which is unable to be divided further into parts while remaining a coherent whole. It expresses negation by denying divisibility. The words 'this something' is said in order to express the same signification. But, where 'individual' merely expresses that denial, or negation, of divisibility, 'this something' conveys that meaning (the denial, or negation, of divisibility) and more. As Henry states it, "this something...adds the character of negation in relation to a part divided with it. For when 'this' is said, a thing is understood to be something individual...But when 'something' is added, there is expressed that it is made something other from which it is divided."<sup>101</sup>

The meaning that is expressed by the use, or utterance, of 'individual' is accomplished also by the use, or utterance, of the term 'this' alone. (In other words, 'this something' is understood as an 'individual something'.) But the addition of the word 'something' changes and adds to the meaning of the expression. So, the important difference between the two names 'individual' and 'this something' hinges upon the second term of the latter name. Namely, 'something.' Or, put differently, the word 'this'

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<sup>101</sup> *"Hoc aliquid vero exprimit negationem eandem in comparatione ad ipsum divisum, et addit cum hoc rationem negationis in comparatione ad partem condivisam. Cum enim dicitur 'hoc' intelligitur res sive natura esse quid indivisum sive individuum in se propter demonstratione rei quae oculis conspici potest. Cum vero additur ly aliquid, exprimitur quod fit a condiviso aliud quid et in natura et essentia individua et in supposito."* (SLIII, Q1, par.7, lines 81-87.)

(referring to the character of this-ness) acts as 'individual' does to refer to the character of individuality. When 'this' is said, a thing or nature is understood to be something undivided or individual in itself because of the designation of a thing that can be seen by the eyes. (i.e., the entity in reality). The word 'something' does not. 'Something' then adds to this-ness/individuality an added nuance between nature, essence, and supposite. When 'something' is added, the expression means to make the entity designated by the 'this' something other than merely an individual. The otherness also expresses a distinct essence and nature. At this point, Henry has laid out the difference between the first and second terms. He then goes on to discuss how, like individual, the term 'this something' cannot properly apply to the persons of the trinity.

The reason Henry is distinguishing between these two names in the first place, we should remember, is driven by his larger discussion of the divine persons in the Christian God. These are two names which are commonly used to speak about that personhood, so, they must be carefully examined if one seeks to speak wisely on the subject. Henry acknowledges that a problem arises when one wishes to speak about the persons of God, if one wishes to say that the monotheistic, albeit triune, God contains different 'individual, this something's' given the above distinctions. In the case of God, or the divine persons, the term 'individual' and its parallel name, in meaning, 'this' can both refer, but the added meaning implied by the inclusion of 'something' does not apply.

It cannot apply because something, unlike indivisibility or this-ness alone, implies the character of 'otherness' in supposite. And, as Henry maintains, there is nothing 'other' in God, insofar as 'other' expresses a difference in nature or essence. God, as the divine persons, may be triune (in other words, his meaning may encompass this-ness, or the character of three individuated entities in reality) but must have only one nature and essence. Christ is not another essence apart from the Holy Spirit in a real sense. Since the difference of meaning between divine and human persons cannot lie in otherness, or something, by virtue of different natures/essences, the difference must be accounted for, he argues, through otherness of supposites.

Since the neuter form of 'other' names by itself (i.e. without the attached 'this') an essential difference, when used absolutely (as when one says 'this something' to express the meaning discussed above), it would be incorrect to admit that of God. (If it is meant absolutely- namely, that in God, one of the divine supposites is something other than the other.) But, it is said (functions/designates meaning) correctly if it is meant to determine that one supposite is different from the other.

If we want to speak properly of God and creatures using the same terms, we must distinguish the sense, or meaning, of 'other' in its different applications. For example, the difference in the sense of the masculine form of the term as opposed to the neuter case. In this case, of course, as it relates to our use of the names 'individual' and 'this something' to refer to God the Father, the son, and/or the Holy Spirit. We can say that, in creatures, an individual supposite is a 'this something.' It is an individual or

something (entity) individuated in itself, but also something other than another suppositum which has something in a common essence but in an individual essence something also different. And this causes no problem because the entities referred to (distinguished by the terms as separate) in reality are also different 'something's' with different natures and essences.<sup>102</sup>

But when we apply these terms to God, as the divine persons (as opposed to human persons), we must distinguish differently, so as not to imply a difference of natures and essences between the entities to which the names refer. We must, in other words, use different names. In God, as opposed to creatures which can be called 'this something's,' a suppositum is properly said to be, rather, 'this someone.' The use, or function, of the name 'this someone' is meant to convey two things. First, by 'this' which is an expression of a singular existence in a suppositum (individuality). And secondly, by 'someone' which refers to some one as opposed to another and distinct from him, but not of another nature/essence. 'Someone' expresses one general instance of a nature from a group of instances of that nature.

### *Singulare*

Besides speaking of the divine persons as 'individual' in character, or as 'this someone,' we are also inclined to use the word 'singular' in our descriptions of such

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<sup>102</sup> "Unde si proprie velimus loqui in divinis sicut in creaturis, debemus in hoc nomine 'alius' distinguere rationem generis masculini et neutri, ut sicut in creaturis proprie dicimus individuum suppositum esse 'hoc aliquid,' 'hoc' id est in se individuum sive individuum, sed ab alio supposito aliud quid, hoc est in essentiali communi quid, sed in essentiali individuali aliud quid ab essentiali condivisi, sic in Deo proprie dicitur suppositum hic aliquis, 'hic' id est in supposito singulare existens, sed ab alio supposito alius quis et distinctus ad eo." SLIII, Q1, p7, 96-103.

instances. So, Henry takes up the meaning of this term next. He does so, placing the term 'singular' as a segue between the first two terms and the next five to follow, because, he says, the next six terms are all found in a created reality and an uncreated one, but singularity differs from the terms which shall follow by virtue of being found in common accidents. According to Henry, that which is singular is found in common in accidents as well as in substances. (While, as mentioned, he will demonstrate that the next five names are found only in terms of the latter.)

The character of something singular is, by definition, that of being one solitary something.<sup>103</sup> And, because the term 'singular' includes the meaning of 'solitary,' the term singular can be understood in two distinct ways, namely, absolutely or with a determination. When the term 'singular' is understood in the first way (absolutely) it cannot be admitted of God's character, based upon the teachings of Peter Lombard, and the established tradition of the period. Henry cites book I of the *Sentences*, where the Master says that 'singularity or solitariness shows that a plurality of persons is excluded.'<sup>104</sup>

If understood this way, Henry maintains, it would be false to assert of human beings that one human being, like Socrates, is singular. It would be false because it would exclude, by virtue of the term's distinguishing character, or function, the

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<sup>103</sup>"*Sed illud quod est singulare invenitur communitur in accidentibus et substantiis; alia vero quinque in substantiis tantum. Singularis autem ratio est quod sit unum aliquid solitarium. Sed intelligendum quod singulare includendo solitarium potest intelligi absolute vel cum determinatione.*" (SLIII,Q1,p8,105-109.)

<sup>104</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sentences* 1, 23, 5; ed. I. Brady, 1, p.186. (Roland Teske 'restored *pluritatem* which is also found in several mss.' (Q1, 8. N18)

fellowship of all others who share in human nature along with Socrates. But, since the term can be understood alternatively (with a determination), as will be shown below, Henry holds that it may apply to human beings in one way and in divine persons (God) another.

‘For in God,’ Henry writes, ‘there cannot be solitariness in either act or in potency.’<sup>105</sup> In other words, the divine persons, though triune and distinct, do not contain multiple acts and potency in the way described by Lombard. This differs from human persons, since in the case of Socrates and his fellow human beings, there can be solitariness in act. Humanity, as such, could exist in only a single supposite. So, Henry is led to conclude that we may speak of the solitariness of human beings (i.e. use the term ‘singular’ to refer) in an absolute manner, only if we mean by that the singular whole of humanity, not the particular instance of ‘Socrates.’ We cannot speak absolutely at all of the divine persons in terms of absolute singularity though.

However, ruling out an absolute function for the term does not exclude it from use all together. For Henry returns now to the second way in which we may understand ‘singularity.’ Rather than absolutely, the term can also be taken ‘with a determination.’ In this way, then, it (the character of ‘singular’) can be admitted in both (human beings as well as God/the divine persons) with regard to the essence and with regard to the supposite. If used properly, in other words, we may speak accurately of God and human

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<sup>105</sup> “...*quia in divinis non potest esse solitudo neque actu neque potentia;*” SLIII, Q1, p8, 115-116.

beings using the same name to refer to the presence of a certain type of singularity without violating the univocal nature of the former.

Henry needs to be able to speak this way of the divine persons because they do, in a sense, contain a certain singularity and a singular essence, or else we would not be able to refer to the triune nature as a whole or speak meaningfully about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit separately.<sup>106</sup> Although the deity is, Henry wants to maintain, singular in nature, that singularity must also encompass (in some manner) the addition of other, singular persons.

The Father of the trinity, for example, is a certain singular person. But, while singular, the character does not exclude the fellowship of many persons (like a Son) as it would have in the previous case of absolute meaning. This is coherent, yet avoids the violations of an absolute use, similarly to our being able to say of Peter that 'Peter is a singular person,' without the intention of excluding him from the larger fellowship of human beings, but rather, in order to distinguish him by excluding the plurality (or plurification) of that in which the singularity is said to exist, whether that be in the essence or the supposite. In this way, or, taken with this determination, the meaning of the term 'singular' can refer to both the created and uncreated.

However, though it may refer similarly in the case above, the character of being 'singular' belongs to the essence and supposite of creatures differently than it does to the essence and supposite in God. For, unlike the created, in the uncreated (in God)

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<sup>106</sup> A reference to Gregory.

singularity belongs to the essence itself, not by virtue of having being in a person, but by virtue of being divine.<sup>107</sup> (Henry as has already drawn out above his reasons for holding that the deity must be understood as a singular essence of itself.<sup>108</sup> ) So, when we speak of ‘God the Father’ as a singular instance, or of ‘God the Son’ our mention of the name is not meant to imply exclusion/multiplicity of essences, but rather the persons of God, as Peter is a person of humanity. (In this restricted sense, and nothing more.)

The term ‘singular’ differs, then, when applied to humanity as opposed to the divine, insofar as it is not a ‘this’ of itself, but only by virtue of belonging to ‘this’ person. (Also established above.) So, the difference in use/meaning lies in the way in which the term is understood to relate to essence and supposite. Singularity, as Henry will continue to discuss, has being in a different way in God and in creatures. So, while it may apply, in a specialized sense, it does not suffice to convey the proper meaning of divine personhood.

### *Res Naturae*

Henry’s discussion of singularity, i.e. the term ‘singular,’ is followed by a brief treatment of ‘natural things.’ As Henry suggests, ‘natural things’ are different from that which is said to be ‘singular.’ Natural things differ from singularity, insofar as the meaning of ‘singular’ belongs to both an essence and a supposite. The term ‘natural

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<sup>107</sup> *“Deitas enim est singularitas quaedam sive quaedam singularis essential ex se, ut habitum est supra. Non sic autem humanitas, quia ex se non est hoc, sed solummodo quia est huius, ut similiter supra habitum est. Aliter similiter habet esse in supposito singularitas in Deo et in creaturis, ut declarabitur infra.”* (SLIII,Q1,p8,129-133.)

<sup>108</sup> (Q1, 8. N20): See SQO 52, 2; ed. M. Fuhrer, pp. 250-253.

thing,' however, does not apply to an essence, but only a supposite. As a result, the character of a supposite is not found in accidents (arbitrary attributes attached to substances), but only in substances themselves. The essence, in contrast, is itself a nature- regardless of whether it is that of a substance or an accident. So, Henry maintains, only the supposite of a substance can properly be said to be a natural thing.<sup>109</sup> Henry bases this claim upon his ideas on the nature of essence, specifically, that whether it be accidental or substantial, essence has ratification of its existence only in the supposite of a substance. For, as Henry mentions elsewhere in his discussion of 'individual,' "a natural thing is properly said to be an individual, but a nature is said to be the essence of a thing whether in itself or as individuated in a supposite."<sup>110</sup>

The notion of substance is then used as a segue into Henry's treatment of the next term- 'subsistence.'

### *Subsistentia*

Henry's discussion of the meaning of 'natural things' concludes with a brief reference to substance. He notes there that essence (whether of substance or accident) only becomes ratified in the supposite of a substance. Substance, then, applies to individuals. Henry uses this characteristic to distinguish the meaning of 'subsistence' from the other terms in question.

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<sup>109</sup> "Solum vero suppositum substantiae est res naturae, quia essentia sive substantialis sive accidentalis ratitudinem suae existentiae non habet nisi in supposito substantiae." (SLIII,Q1,p9,139-141.)

<sup>110</sup> SLIII, Q1, par. 6.

In the tenth paragraph of this question, Henry takes up the meaning of 'subsistence.' Having already related substance strictly to individuals, it is at this point where he considers 'subsistence' in relation to universals. Noting the etymological roots of the term, he appeals to its common usage, as it functioned for both the Greeks and Latins. According to this standard meaning, he maintains, 'subsistence' belongs in common to both individuals and universals. Subsistence applies to something which is universal, in that it belongs to a genus and a species, while also being used to apply to/belongs to individuals. Subsistence means 'to subsist.' Unlike the substance of an individual, subsistence implies the act of holding oneself up. As Henry says, 'it is meant to stand in holding oneself up.' Subsistence, therefore, belongs to everything that is in the category of substance. (Insofar as it is substance.<sup>111</sup>) We might think of this in terms of the circles of a Venn Diagram- where each circle represents a term and includes all those things which that term applies too. In the case of substance and subsistence, the circle representing 'substance' would be contained in a larger circle of those things which are said to subsist.

At this point, then, Henry has established the meaning of (individual\*), 'this something,' 'singular,' 'natural thing,' and 'subsistence.' The nature of substance, or the meaning of the term used to refer to substance, has been mentioned in the previous discussions- used as a point of distinction for gaining clarity on the terms 'natural thing'

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<sup>111</sup> *"Dicitur enim subsistere sive subsistencia quasi se ipsum 'tenendo sistere', et convenit omni ei quod est in praedicamento substantiae in quantum substantia est."* (SLIII,Q1,p10, 145-147.)

and 'subsistence' specifically. So, building upon what he has already said about the term, Henry moves next to an examination of 'substance.'

### *Substare*

'Subsistence,' for the ancient Greeks and Latins, meant 'to stand in holding oneself up.' This characteristic is said to belong to those things of an individual nature as well as to universals. 'Substance,' however, implies the connotation 'to stand under.' According to Henry, substance is said to mean that which is under something else (whether under accidents or universals) that strictly belongs to an individual substance.<sup>112</sup> He cites Aristotle and Boethius as exemplary support for his claim about this meaning. In the *Categories*, Henry notes, first substance is "most of all and principally said to be that which is neither in another nor said of another."<sup>113</sup> But other things are in substance or said of it too. Therefore, as he also cites, Boethius continued to make the further claim, in *On the Two Natures*, "Substances subsist only in particular individuals. For the understanding of universals is taken from particulars. Hence, since essences exist in universals, they receive substance in particulars."<sup>114</sup> It stands under, Henry suggests, in that it offers a subject to accidents in which/so that they can be. (i.e., become actualized in a substance.) Again, Henry is carefully treating the meaning of the eight terms by distinguishing them from one another. He has given a restricted definition of substance as it relates to subsistence, considering each term in the context

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<sup>112</sup> (SLIII,Q1,p11,148-150.)

<sup>113</sup> Aristotle, *Categories* 5.2a11-13; Boethius, trans. ed L. Minio-Paluello, p.7.

<sup>114</sup> Boethius, *Against Eutyches and Nestorius* 3; ed. C. Moreschini, p.216; PL 64: 1344B.

of individuals and universals. This is a clear point at which we see the discussion of his theory of universals arise out of his questions about the divine persons!

Henry understands this as a progression of Boethius' own consideration for the etymological roots of the term. For Boethius writes, in the same text mentioned above, that genus and species only subsist because accidents do not properly belong to them. Individuals, however, are not only admitted by Boethius to subsist, but also to stand under in the manner that is proper to substance alone. In that text, Henry notes that Boethius also gave consideration for the common usage of the term by the ancient Greeks. According to him, "they call hypostases individual substances, because they stand under other things and are subject to other things, such as accidents."<sup>115</sup> So, Boethius' acknowledgment confirms, 'substances' are used by the Latins much the same way 'hypostases' is used by the Greeks.

To summarize at this point for clarity, all substances subsist, but not all subsisting things are substances. Substances subsist, furthermore, only in particular individuals, and therefore, not in universals alone because those are taken from particulars. The term 'substance,' then, implies a different meaning than the Latin 'subsistence' which is closer in function to that of the Greek 'hypostases.' 'Supposite' however, as Henry takes up next, does convey the same meaning as 'subsistence.' In fact, Henry claims that they are 'entirely the same.'<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Boethius, *Against Eutyches and Nestorius* 3; ed. C. Moreschini, p.216; PL 64: 1344B.

<sup>116</sup> "Suppositum vero apud nos penitus idem est quod subsistentia, et convenit tam universali quam singulari in praedicamento substantiae." (SLIII,Q1,p12,163-165.)

I include here, somewhat out of order with the primary text, Henry's final comment on the meaning of this term. After treating the meaning of 'supposite,' but before addressing the term 'person,' Henry makes a comment about a change to the meaning of 'substance.' He says that, despite the common usage of the ancients, there was (by the time he is writing) a different function for the name as it was being used among the Latins and Greeks. He, along with his contemporaries, does not use the term in the same way, in part, because of a distinction pointed out by Augustine in *On the Trinity*. Augustine states there that, unlike the Greeks, the Latin use of 'substance' developed to assume an implication about essence. And, 'essence' is not usually understood in another way other than substance. This final inclusion of 'essence' will provide his segue into his treatment of the term 'person.' But, first, let us return to the meaning of 'supposite.'

### *Suppositum*

If the term 'supposite' means entirely the same thing as the term 'subsistence,' as Henry maintains at the beginning of this section, one might wonder why it merits its own treatment as a term at all. Or, at least, why it merits more than the mere statement of equivalence alone. 'Supposite' does mean the same thing for Henry as 'subsistence' in terms of, or in relation to, substance. (The term just discussed above.) These two terms imply similar meaning insofar as they both belong to what is singular, as well as that which is universal, in the category of substance. This is, specifically, due to the

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shared function of standing for either ‘what is signified or what is named.’<sup>117</sup> A ‘supposite’ however, is different, because in something singular, the same thing is signified and named, but this is not the case in respect to universals.

Henry then offers a final reflection on the meaning of ‘substance’ (which I have included out of order, but on topic, in the section devoted to that term<sup>118</sup> ) before addressing the notion of ‘person.’ So, at this point let us revisit his remarks on ‘*individuum*.’

‘Individual’ is the first of the eight terms to be examined by Henry in this question. But, I have chosen to hold it and analyze it here, so that it will be placed in direct relation to his treatment of ‘person,’ which is the last of the eight terms to be discussed. I place them in this context, primarily, for the sake of clarity against my larger thesis- one which I situate in relation to Gracia’s work on *The Problem of Individuation in the Middle Ages*.<sup>119</sup>

Henry takes up the meaning of ‘individual’ in response to a statement made by Boethius in *On the Two Natures*. In the passage of note, Boethius asserts that “If one wants to say ‘nature’ of all natural things, such a definition will be given that can include

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<sup>117</sup> SLIII, Q1, par.11.

<sup>118</sup> See Part V.

<sup>119</sup> Thanks to the Philosophy Department at The University of South Carolina, through their outstanding work on the lecture series, I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Martin Pickave to discuss his view of Henry’s treatment of the term ‘*individuum*.’ Pickave’s work about individuation in Henry has been tremendously helpful while navigating what Henry has to say about the issue in Article fifty-three. The Professors insights into the correlation between Gracia’s project and Henry’s statements in his *Summa* greatly benefited this study at a critical stage in its development. For anyone interested in understanding individuation in Henry’s ontology further, I highly recommend his contribution to the *Brill Companion to Henry of Ghent: Henry of Ghent on Individuation, Essence, And Being*. (M. Pickave, *Henry of Ghent On Individuation, Essence, And Being* 2010)

all the things that exist. Such a nature belongs to those things that, since they exist, can be grasped by the intellect.”<sup>120</sup> According to Henry, then, each of the eight terms represent and signify almost the same thing with regard to the nature and essence of a natural thing, when nature is taken in its broadest sense. Boethius’ definition, Henry acknowledges, defines substances and accidents. But, it should be understood that the term ‘individual’ (as well as ‘this something’) is found only in the essence of a creature, i.e. a created thing, both in substances and accidents alike, but not in any way in the uncreated, or, the divine/God. Henry insists upon this distinction because, for example, the term ‘individual’ gets meaning from a distinction. ‘Individual,’ he maintains, is distinguished over/against (derives meaning from) ‘non-individual’ as its contrary. Something non-individual can only exist where there is something really universal. Nor, he argues, is the term used with intention of referring to the non-individual except when pointing to a universal. For an individual, by virtue of the meaning of the term, is only applied to something particular- in other words, for singulars individuated under a universal. (See discussion of substance as ‘to stand under’ in Part V.) And, in the alternative manner, the character of ‘individual’ is only intended in cases of particular instances with regard to reality.<sup>121</sup> This distinction is significant considering his overall project of applying these terms to a notion of ‘person’ which must include the divine persons of a triune nature.

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<sup>120</sup> Boethius, *Against Eutyches and Nestorius* 1; ed. C. Moreschini, p.209; PL 64: 1341B.

<sup>121</sup> SLIII, Q1, par. 5.

The application of 'individual,' as Henry presents it, is related to the character of universals and particulars. But, in God, Henry notices, it is not possible to find the character of a real universal or particular.<sup>122</sup> So, it will similarly not be possible to find the character of an individual, except by extending the name 'individual' to the character of a singular. In other words, in order to properly apply the term 'individual' to the divine persons, the meaning of the term needs to be extended beyond the one addressed at the start. Henry points to an example of this distinction employed in the *Decretals*, where it is written 'This holy Trinity individual according to the common essence...And separate in accord with the personal properties.'<sup>123</sup> He uses this as an example of extension- in this case, 'separation' has been extended to mean 'distinction.' Now the term may be properly applied, because separation does not belong to God, but distinction must.

### *Persona*

The last of the eight terms to be considered by Henry in question 1, article 53 of his *Quaestiones Ordinariae (Summa)* is 'person.' At this point, he has presented an account for the meaning of seven other terms- individual, this something, singular, natural thing, subsistence, substance, and supposite- inquiring as to whether they can be properly applied to/synonymous with each other. He has undertaken this examination, remember, to address the question of whether it is necessary to hold that

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<sup>122</sup> See SQO 43, 2; ed. L. Hodl, pp.52-53.

<sup>123</sup> Gregory IX, *Decretals* 1, 1, 1; ed. Ae. Friedberg, 2, p.5.

there is a person in God. So, the ultimate project is to relate each of these terms to the final word, 'person.'

According to his articulation of the meaning of the aforementioned terms, "'substance,' 'supposite,' 'subsistence,' and such like," are said with an improper meaning if applied to God, "insofar as it depends on character of the name," because what subsists (stands/holding up) in God does not stand under anything else- neither universal nor accidental. The confusion stems, Henry asserts, from the original usage of the term as belonging to creatures, and therefore implying creaturely impositions. But, in God, when the meaning is extended (or distinguished) as he suggests here, 'person' subsists by itself in the essence.<sup>124</sup>

Following his consideration of 'supposite' and 'substance,' Henry returns his attention to etymological differences found between ancient Greek and Latin uses of these terms, this time with respect to 'person.' The Greeks, he writes, use the word 'person' to signify the same thing (in reality) as '*hypostases*' or 'substance' could. The Latin usage of the term, however, developed a point of contrast regarding the generality of that usage and over the proper meaning it should be understood and purported to convey. When it comes to the generality of usage, Henry reasons that the Latins use the name '*hypostases*' or 'substance' without any difference (both in intellectual and non-intellectual beings), whereas the Greeks use 'substance' only in rational beings.<sup>125</sup> And,

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<sup>124</sup> SLIII, Q1, par. 14.

<sup>125</sup> See also Part V on 'substance.'

he argues, a similar difference occurs in the meaning of *'prosopon.'* Or, *'persona.'* He credits Boethius for drawing the distinction: *'When they say prosopa, we can also call the same substances persons.'*<sup>126</sup> Henry notes that the Latin usage applies only to intellectual or rational beings. "For," he writes, "although it signifies the same intention in creatures as this name *'individual,'* it does so with regard to a determinate matter, namely, rational."<sup>127</sup> (Again, supported by Boethius.)

At this point, Henry provides an example by way of analogy- relating the terms *'snub'* and *'curved'* in terms of a nose. Henry points out, of course, that *'snub'* and *'curved'* signify the same thing (namely, a particular characteristic of the nose), but the latter does so indifferently with respect to any matter, whereas the former, *'snub,'* signifies, or refers to, the same thing, just in specific respect to nose like things.<sup>128</sup> For example, a road may be *'curved,'* as well as a sculpture, or signature, or dimensional plane. But *'snub'* is used to indicate that feature in noses alone. In the same way then, he encourages, one can think about the meanings/usage of *'individual'* and *'person.'* *'Individual'* signifies something indeterminate in relation to a rational and non-rational nature (like *'curved'* signifies beyond the context of a nose), yet *'person'* signifies something determinate- something proper to a rational nature. (*'Person'* then is analogous in our example to *'snub.'*) So, he reasons, the name *'person'* "implies a

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<sup>126</sup> Boethius, *Against Eutyches and Nestorius* 3; ed. C. Moreschini, p.217; PL 64: 1344D.

<sup>127</sup> SLIII, Q1, par. 13.

<sup>128</sup> "*Quemadmodum enim idem significant curvum et simum, sed curvum significat illud sub indifferentia ad quamlibet materiam, simum vero significat idem ut determinatum ad nasum et proprium ei, sic individuum significat indeterminatum quid ad naturam rationalem et irrationalem; persona vero determinatum et proprium quid naturae rationali.*" (SLIII,Q1,p13,187-191.)

character of dignity”<sup>129</sup> that the former does not. Henry means by this that, because the term ‘person’ is reserved for a more restricted/specific case of objects it can refer, it implies/imposes a higher, more sophisticated, level of meaning. In the same way ‘snub’ captures something specific to nose-type things that ‘curved’ cannot (due to its generality of use), so too the term ‘person’ captures something about things of a rational nature which the term ‘individual’ cannot.

Understood in the manner put forth, Henry maintains, the term ‘person’ can be/is admitted in God without any improper meaning of the name. In other words, the word can be used and applied to signify the divine without violating the essence of that which it is intended to refer. He pauses here, before moving on to the reply portion of the question, to bring Richard of St. Victor back to the forefront of the discussion. In *On the Trinity* Richard points out that ‘some call persons subsistence’s and others call them substances,’ but ‘...they can less properly’ be said to be so. While in the Latin usage ‘no name can be found that can be better suited to the divine plurality than the name ‘person.’<sup>130</sup> Henry is using Richard’s statements here as an illustration of the value he has placed upon the term ‘person’ over ‘individual’ above, given the restricted nature of its signification.

To the first argument (that ‘rational’ and ‘individual’ are, according to Boethius, placed in the definition of person) Henry responds that ‘Person,’ when understood after his treatment of the names, ‘subsists by itself in the essence’. Boethius’ ‘rational’ can be

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<sup>129</sup> SLIII, Q1, par. 13.

<sup>130</sup> Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 4, 20; ed. J. Ribaillier, p.184; PL 196: 943C; and p.186; PL 196: 944C.

expanded to include ‘the purely intellectual’ and ‘individual’ in terms of ‘incommunicable.’ What subsists in God, he argues, cannot be said to stand underneath something, whether that be a universal or set of accidents.<sup>131</sup> For, “where Boethius says that ‘a person is an individual substance of a rational nature’, Richard says that ‘a person is an incommunicable existence of an intellectual nature. But how this definition must be understood and explained, will be seen below.”

To the second argument, that there is said to be three persons in the divine in order that one may have something to say of it, Henry responds that one should take Augustine to be right “on account of the novelty of the use of the same name with regard to God.” Henry suggests that Augustine was simply attempting to show that Christians could meaningfully speak of the triune nature of the Trinity, when asked about the matter by probing heretics. That which is expressed by the name ‘person’ was in truth from eternity in God according to its true meaning, or could be conceived with regard to him, and that the usage of the term was forced to take on false meanings when misunderstood or taken out of context. (Though Henry does acknowledge here that Augustine did not provide a sufficient account for the heretics through his statement, but only a comfort to the believers.) He references Richard again as having seen this problem and addressed it in book 4, chp. 5 of his work *On the Trinity*. Richard argues in that text for the important role of the Holy Spirit in proper conceptualization

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<sup>131</sup> God is not a substance, so Boethius’s definition of person would not apply to God.

of the names. As such, he concludes, this is the meaning one should be after when inquiring into the nature of the divine persons.

Yes, this is a metaphysical account of personhood, insofar as it is an attempt to define the reality, or real nature, of the subject in question. But, Henry addresses this inquiry by way of asking how the term applies- whether it is a term of first or second intention, whether the word applies to the actual individual or the universal concept, what distinctions and relations should be considered...these are epistemic questions, which demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to linguistic, as well as logical, implications. Prior to this study, a discussion of the persons in the Trinity may not have seemed an obvious, or even helpful, place to look for Henry's theory of universals. Yet, here it is. This is the epistemological turn. Henry is unique in being sensitive to the fact that metaphysical discussions of substance, person, etc. have epistemological consequences or epistemological assumptions. Henry was perhaps the first secular theologian to demonstrate this awareness, or, at least, make it explicit in his metaphysical analyses.<sup>132</sup>

And, this is the crux of my thesis. Henry acknowledges that the term 'persona' may be problematic as it had been used and understood by his predecessors and contemporaries. So, he considers the other possible options. As we know, the persons of the trinity are incredibly important for Christian theologians and medieval philosophers to get right. So, if there was a more accurate way of thinking and speaking

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<sup>132</sup> Henry's analysis of the status of universals seems remarkably close to Abelard who got into trouble for his "nominalism," even though this oversimplified Abelard's position. Henry does not get in trouble for his theory. Just an interesting point that might one day merit closer attention

about the subject, one ought to consider it seriously. Henry does just that. For if one of the other eight terms could convey the same meaning and prove useful in forming the same concept of 'person' yet without the historical pitfalls of that term, such a correction should be made. Hence, the exercise of article 53, question 1. But in examining the eight terms, Henry arrives at the conclusion that this cannot be achieved. The term person conveys something unique which no other available terms can achieve when applied to the divine nature. In fact, the epistemological consequence of using a term other than 'persona' is worse than any seemingly negative consequences that come along with it because something essentially important is lost.

Here, we must consider Henry's notion of 'incommunicability.' For it is the reason Henry thinks it necessary to hold the notion of the divine persons. As he demonstrates, the term 'person' implies an uncommon-ness which the other terms available fail to capture. A person, specifically, lacks any commonness with any other entity. This is why it is so important for our understanding of the divine nature. Here is his correction of Richard of St. Victor's treatment of the term. Henry claims that Richard missed this important point, and furthermore, that his analysis is incomplete because of it. This uncommonness cannot be articulated by any other term than person, and so, it is necessary that the triune nature of the divine be labeled, rightly, as persons rather than individuals, supposites, and so on. Let us now lay out his comparison of the eight terms more clearly so that we might see why this is the case.

## CHAPTER 5

### AN ANALYSIS OF SUMMA, ARTICLE 53, QUESTION 1

The Medieval style of writing can often seem scattered and obtuse to the modern reader. And Henry's teachings are known to be a challenge. John Duns Scotus admitted to his own difficulty in navigating through Henry's thought, in part because it was ever evolving, but also because Henry seldom states his own stance directly. One must often absorb the whole and sit back to reflect upon the details before the general meaning will present itself. In the case of question 1 and Henry's treatment of the eight terms, it is helpful to lay out the consequences of his discussion in an organized, applied manner so that we can see the results of his arguments in the same way his students might have in a discussion after his lecture. Taking the above exegesis into account, let us consider the first seven terms separately as they each compare to the term 'person.' Because as Henry himself admits at the start of his discussion "these names represent and signify almost the same thing with regard to the nature and essence of a natural thing, when nature is taken in a very broad sense."<sup>133</sup> So let us arrange them in regard to 'person' specifically.

Remember the original problems which Henry posed as the motivation for this question: the implications of Boethius' use of the terms 'rational nature' and 'individual

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<sup>133</sup> Teske, 2014. p.5

substance,' and Augustine's remark that one only uses the term 'person' so as not to remain silent. Also, recall Henry's insistence upon attributing to God only that which is most noble and worthy of perfection.

Based upon Henry's definition of a person: p4: "Person names something that is without qualification of dignity. For, from what it signifies, it names the character of something incommunicable...and this comes from the perfection of him who has in himself what cannot be communicated to another." ("It also names that with regard to a rational or intellectual nature...")

### The Eight Terms, Compared

- I. Are all instances of 'this something' a person? NO
- Are all 'persons' referred to by 'this something'? NO

This something, according to Henry, has a two-fold meaning. 'This' captures the equivalent meaning of 'individual' and the addition of 'something' connects onto that the sense of otherness (i.e. an other nature or essence in a supposite). So, there are instances of things that exist as 'this something' which are not persons. And there are instances of persons which do not exist as 'somethings.' But rather, 'someone.'

The relevance of distinction comes into play here, because Henry points out the difference between the meaning of 'other' through the masculine and neuter genders, where the neuter is absolute, and the masculine allows for the distinction to allow for some 'one' instead of some 'thing.'

II. Are all '*singular*' entities persons? **NO**

Are all '*persons*' singular? **NO**

The character of something singular, according to Henry, is that of one solitary something. So, there are singular entities which would not be considered persons and there are divine persons which would not be considered singular since they are neither 'something' nor solitary. Now, again, a distinction can be made, Henry acknowledges, between the absolute singularity of human persons and the restricted singularity of God's essence which does not include God's personhood. For example, Socrates and Plato are both singular humans. If Socrates dies, humanity remains in Plato as a singular human. God is a singular nature, but God is not three separate persons such that God would still be God without the person of the Father.

III. Is every '*natural thing*' a person? **NO**

Are all '*persons*' natural things? **NO**

A natural thing, according to Henry, is properly said to be an individual (\*p6) and belongs only to a supposite/substance. So, there are many non-person beings and objects that count as natural things. But the incommunicable element of personhood does not require a supposite/substance/individual in the case of God. Thus, persons which are not natural things.

IV. Is every '*subsistence*' a person? **NO**

Is every '*person*' a subsistence? **NO**

Subsistence, according to Henry, belongs in common to something universal, that is to a genus and to a species, and to individuals. "To subsist" is said as if it meant to stand in holding oneself up, and it belongs to everything that is in the category of substance.<sup>134</sup> Thus, there are entities which subsist as something other than persons. And the persons of God do not subsist, insofar as they are not universals/individuals. (See 'supposite' which Henry takes to be a synonymous term.)

Later, when Henry is discussing the meaning of person, he makes a distinction with respect to subsistence. Stating that it is improperly applied to God if meant to 'stand under,' he notes that one could say, appropriately, that a person subsists by itself in the essence. But this still requires the unique notion of personhood and therefore is not as noble a signification as 'person' alone.

V. Are all '**substances**' persons? **NO**

Do all '*persons*' have substance? **NO**

Substance, according to Henry, means 'to stand under.' That is, to stand under something else, be it accident or universal, and therefore properly implies *individual* substance. Thus, there are many substances that are not persons. And there are persons, such as God the father, who are not particularized by some other universal as a substance. Henry notes a difference between the use of 'substance' among the Greeks as opposed to the Latin use by his students and colleagues. The Greeks use substance only in the case of rational beings, whereas the Latin use is more general. Yet, as he

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<sup>134</sup> Teske, 2014. p.10

explains, the Latin use of person is more specific, implying the addition of rational and essence. Thus, a distinction is needed between prosopon and persona.

VI. Is every '*supposite*' a person? **NO**

Is every '*person*' a supposite? **NO**

Supposite, according to Henry, is "entirely the same" as 'subsistence.'<sup>135</sup> It belongs to what is universal, as well as what is singular, in the category of substance. Since they stand for what is signified or named, there are non-person supposites. But there are also divine persons which are not properly said to be supposites, insofar as they are not attached to substance as individual or universal. (See 'subsistence.')

VII. Are all '*individuals*' persons? **NO**

Are all '*persons*' individual? **NO**

An individual, according to Henry, is something in-dividuated under a universal. So, there are many non-person particulars which are individual. And uncreated, divine persons which are neither nor attached to universals, and so are not individual. The issue of distinction becomes clear at this point, when Henry caveats that the term 'individual' can apply to the divine persons in a restricted sense as singular/separate if extended to distinction.

VIII. Persons

**All persons, are, therefore:** beings of an intellectual nature and an incommunicable essential quality.

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<sup>135</sup> Teske, 2014. p.12

**All persons, are not, therefore:** instances of ‘this something’, absolute ‘singularity,’ ‘natural things,’ ‘subsistence,’ ‘substance,’ ‘supposite,’ or ‘individual.’

Some persons- namely created, human persons- also happen to be instances of singularity, subsistence, individuality, and so on. But the logical claim ‘All’ does not apply because of the uniqueness of the divine persons as having none of those other qualities absolutely.

Henry has essentially constructed verbal Venn diagrams which demonstrate the existence of elements unique to the category of ‘person.’ They necessitate the use of the term, and in some ways define it, whereby ‘person’ captures that subset of meaning which falls outside the realms of the other seven terms. Once captured through comparison, one can mentally organize the idea of an incommunicable essence in its own right and make proper use of the other terms to draw distinctions.

Of note here is a reflection upon Henry’s original explanation for the organization of this article as a whole. “We must deal with those attributes that pertain to the distinction of the persons first by considering those that pertain to those that are proper (only to be followed by those that are appropriated). And with regard to those that are proper, we must first deal with those that pertain to the individual persons by themselves (secondly with those that belong in relation to each other). And with regard to the individual persons, we must first deal with them in general. And in general as

persons, secondly with the properties of the persons called notions.”<sup>136</sup> He has stayed true to his original proposal.

## The Eight Terms, Applied

To help us understand Henry’s sense of these eight terms in application, and the ontology he constructs with them, let us apply them to beings of a varied nature. For illustration, I have chosen examples from the categories of uncreated being, human animal, non-human animal, and inanimate object. (Specifically, God the father, Jonah the man, a whale, and a sea pebble.) According to Henry, the eight terms would be applied to these beings, properly, if understood in the following manner:

### *The Sea Pebble*

1. This Something? *Yes.*

A sea pebble is an individual object, apart from the sand and sea, with its own existence apart from other sea pebbles.

2. Singular? *Yes.*

A sea pebble is one, solitary existing thing. It is a singular example, or a particular instance, of a universal.

3. Natural Thing? *Yes.*

Since natural things belong to supposites, which belong to substances, and sea pebbles are instances of substance, a sea pebble exists as a natural thing.

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<sup>136</sup> Teske, 2014. p.1

4. Subsistence? *Yes*.

Subsistence belongs to everything that is in the category of substance. Thus, sea pebbles, insofar as they are instances of substance, subsist.

5. Substance? *Yes*.

Substance, as defined by Henry from the Categories, is “most of all and principally said to be that which is neither in another nor said of another, but other things are in it and said of it...It stands under because it offers a subject to accidents so that they can be.”<sup>137</sup> So a sea pebble, as an individual particular instance of a pebble, is a substance. Thus, we can attribute accidents to it, like it is a ‘grey pebble’ or a ‘round pebble.’

6. Supposite? *Yes*.

Entirely the same, according to Henry, as subsistence, the sea pebble exists as a singular in the category of substance.

7. Individual? *Yes*.

A sea pebble is a substance with accidents which subsists as a particular instance of a universal notion of ‘pebble’ and is distinguished against non-individual as its contrary. Thus, is an individual according to Henry’s definition of the term.

8. Person? *No*.

Henry’s working definition of a person requires a being of an intellectual/rational nature. So even setting aside the matter of incommunicability, a sea pebble does not fit the bill.

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<sup>137</sup> Teske, 2014. p.11

## The Whale

1. This Something? *Yes.*

We can stand before the whale and point to it as an individual, existing being-separate from our ourselves and from other whales and from the sea pebble. Thus, signifying it as an other.

2. Singular? *Yes.*

The whale is not all whales. It is a solitary instance of the multitude of whales which swim in the sea.

3. Natural Thing? *Yes.*

A whale is made up of substance, situated as an existing occurrence in nature.

4. Subsistence? *Yes.*

Again, insofar as a whale is an individual substance and natural thing, it subsists.

5. Substance? *Yes.*

A whale is an object we can attribute accidents to, susceptible to generation and decay.

6. Supposite? *Yes.*

A whale is an instance of a supposite, insofar as it is a singular individual.

7. Individual? *Yes.*

The whale is an undivided sort of whole, which subsists as an example of the universal concept of whale- apart from or alongside other particular whales.

8. Person? *No.*

I chose a whale (as opposed to a dolphin or household pet), in part because of its role in a well-known story about uncreated and created beings, but also to stay away from the human/non-human debate. As far as Henry was concerned, along with most of his students and colleagues, whales were in no way intellectual beings with an incommunicable essence. If we were to apply his definition through the modern lens of possible non-human persons, this conclusion may change to include such a category. But that would be our own modification to the ontology, by way of Henry's original teaching.

*Jonah, the man*

1. This Something? *Yes.*

As an instance of an individual 'this' + the addition of otherness, one could point to Jonah as 'this something.' (Using the neuter form of the term.) Yet in addition, and unlike the sea pebble and the whale, Jonah has the quality of personhood. As such, he is more properly referred to by the male-gendered descriptor this 'someone.'

2. Singular? *Yes.*

Jonah is a solitary being, subsisting as a singular suppositum, if we mean to imply that he, as a single man, is an instance of the universal 'humanity.'

3. Natural Thing? *Yes.*

Jonah is a rational animal, and therefore, a substance. So too is he a natural thing.

4. Subsistence? *Yes.*

Insofar as Jonah is a substance with accidents, he also has the quality of subsistence.

5. Substance? *Yes.*

Jonah, the animal, is a physical object susceptible to generation and decay. Insofar as he is considered in that manner, he is considered a substance. If we mean by 'Jonah' the incommunicable nature of personhood, that must be distinguished as a separate notion.

6. Supposite? *Yes.*

Jonah is a supposite because he is a singular, individual being as an essence with accidental qualities.

7. Individual? *Yes.*

Jonah is an individual man as a particular instance of the universal humanity. He is not David, Peter, or Paul. But he stands with them under the same universal 'man.' He has otherness through his accidental qualities, substance, and so on.

8. Person? *Yes.*

Jonah is considered a person because, unlike the sea pebble and the whale, he is a rational animal of an intellectual nature with the quality of an incommunicable essence. In other words, Jonah has something within himself that cannot be communicated to another. It is worth taking note of this point in Henry. Here we find his philosophy of personhood as somehow related to our notion of self-consciousness- insofar as we

mean by that a 'privileged access' like what Henry might intend through his use of 'incommunicability.'

### God, the Father

#### 1. This Something? *No.*

According to Henry's understanding of 'individual' as a particular falling under a universal, and his view of 'this' as synonymous with 'individual,' God's being is not relevant to the term 'this.' And since he takes the term 'something' to imply the addition of substance, and otherness, this does not properly apply to God either. Like in the case of Jonah the human person, God is more appropriately referred to as 'someone.' Unlike Jonah, however, alternate distinctions are required so as not to confuse the otherness of 'someone' with a separateness of the divine persons as one God.

#### 2. Singular? *No.*

God the Father is not singular, if 'singular' is meant absolutely, because plurality of persons would be excluded by singularity of suppositum. A distinction must be made, however, with regards to a determination towards essence. God is singular of essence, while at the same time containing the singularity of fatherhood.

#### 3. Natural Thing? *No.*

Natural things, according to Henry, belong to substance, of which God the Father is not. Note that I specified God the Father, as opposed to the divine persons. Jesus, at the point of being a human man, was perhaps a natural thing. But that is a complicated

rabbit hole to go down and does not affect our project here, so I suggest it be avoided for the time being.

4. Subsistence? *No.*

Subsistence, Henry argues, is said with an “improper meaning in God insofar as it depends on character of the name, because what subsists in God does not stand under something, neither under a higher universal nor under accidents, as is the case in creatures...but person rather subsists by itself in the essence.”<sup>138</sup> So, God does not subsist absolutely. But we might say properly that God the Father does have subsistence in a restricted sense. Namely, ‘as a person’ not ‘as a substance.’

5. Substance? *No.*

God the Father does not ‘stand under’ as a supposite for accidents, generation, and decay. His perfection excludes his nature from having this quality. Again, as with natural thing, the case does get complicated if considering the human manifestation of Christ, the son.

6. Supposite? *No.*

God the Father is not a supposite, in the absolute sense, for the same reason he is not a singular or an individual. These terms imply the existence of accidents, particularity under universals, and all other fore mentioned imperfections.

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<sup>138</sup> Teske, 2014. p.14

7. Individual? *No.*

God, including the person of the Father, is not the sort of being to which ‘individuum,’ as contrary to non-individual and related to a universal, can properly refer.

8. Person? *Yes.*

God the Father, as such, is by necessity a ‘person’ for the same reasons Jonah is considered as such, plus the added degree of perfection brought about by its use rather than any of the other terms. It is necessary to think and speak about him in this manner, because it is the only term available to us which captures the meaning of incommunicability we are after.

Let us notice what Henry has established, after viewing his discussion alongside this analysis: the uniqueness of the term ‘person,’ because of the implications and nuance it contains, and the specialization of its use and meaning which is necessary for the proper concept formation and signification of God. In so doing, he has resolved the problems posed at the outset, as well as established his own working definition of personhood for use in his teachings to follow. He has addressed his first problem—demonstrating the distinctions which explain the language originally chosen by Boethius and the corrections made by Richard of St. Victor. He has rephrased the second problem of Augustine’s remark from ‘in order that one might be silent’ to “on account of the novelty of the use of the name.”<sup>139</sup> Thus, Henry reasons, Augustine was not actually answering the heretics who posed the question, but those believers who might

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<sup>139</sup> Teske, 2014. p.16

understand, and thus “be freed from their attack without the confusion they would have incurred through silence.”

We begin to see, here in his concluding remarks, the real thrust of his discussion. Yes, he is addressing the specific difficulties posed to the treatment of person set forth by Boethius and Augustine. Yes, he is expanding upon the need and efficiency of the correction made by Richard of St. Victor. But indirectly, through his examination of the eight terms, he has drawn attention to the development of the term person as a linguistic/mental tool. He concludes the question with a telling quote from Richard: “Those who first transferred this name ‘person’ to God did so out of necessity,” but under the knowing and purposeful guidance of the Holy Spirit who knew the specialized meaning it could cultivate. And thus, Richard continues, “we are seeking not the understanding with which human beings first imposed” the term, “nor the necessity out of which it was transferred to God, but the truth with which it was inspired...in those who transferred it and has been used universally” ever since. In other words, Henry believes that the proper use of the proper term (the proper connection between word and thing) can result in the proper mental concept. (Thus, we have unexpectedly found a statement on Henry’s philosophy of language and human knowledge by way of his views on the relationship between words, thoughts, and things!) This is what I mean by my thesis of an epistemic turn. According to Henry, using the term ‘person’ to refer to God allows us to think and talk about God’s perfection, and makes possible the distinctions necessary by which to do so.

At the close of Chapter 3, *On Relation*, I proposed that a thorough accounting of Henry's framework of the issues should be able to answer the following questions about the status of universals, individuals, relations, and persons: Are they real? (Do they exist in the world in individual objects?) Or, are they mental concepts? (Do they exist in the mind alone as verbal/cognitive tools?) And how do they each apply to created and uncreated beings? Our investigation into the first question of the fifty-third article of Henry's *Summa* has produced insight into his solutions.

According to this text, we can say the following about Henry's treatment of the terms: All four terms (universal, individual, relation, and person) pick out something real in the world outside the mind. Individual (and therefore also universal), relation, and person can all properly be said to apply to created beings, so long as they fulfill the adequate criteria. However, individual and universal do not apply to the uncreated being of God, since God's unity does not allow for the matter/form dichotomy necessary for the individual/universal hierarchy. Only relation and person apply properly to God, and they do so as necessary, essential qualities of the divine nature.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

Many of Henry's ideas have attracted the attention of contemporary scholars. For example, B. Tierney has recently written about Henry's notion of human rights, an idea that influenced his own distinctions between absolute and ordained powers but may have also influenced William of Ockham in his inquiries into the power of civilian rule. In 1993, R. Teske published English translations of certain questions, in which Henry treats the human will, that have received a great deal of interest and mention. R. Pasnau recently (2002) published translations of two questions from Henry's *Summa* for *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*.

That there is a renewed interest in Henry's thought is evidenced by the two international conferences which took place in 1996 and 2003 and were devoted entirely to Henry's theories. (The proceedings of which have each subsequently been published.) In his two-volume work on science and knowledge of God in the thirteenth century (2000), S. Marrone devotes a quarter of his attention solely to the thought of Henry of Ghent. In 2003, Blackwell's *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* was published, which included a lengthy article by R. Wielockx about the overall views of the

Solemn Doctor. Since that time, Gordon Wilson edited the Brill *Companion to Henry of Ghent*, which is already garnering a great deal of interest and reference.

Others have taken note of Henry's defense of academic freedom for the masters at Paris when the Bishop of Paris attempted to influence and restrict certain topics of discussion at the University, the fact that Henry maintained (contrary to the prominent opinions of his day) that women do have something substantial to contribute to their offspring, and his quite original consideration of whether, even in a just war, a civilian has an absolute obligation to fight.

It is not difficult to imagine how the idea of 'person' relates to each of these issues as well as the project of understanding his larger philosophy, and is therefore, worthy of more careful and comprehensive scholarly attention alongside the rest of his work. Examining that idea in his thought must include an evaluation of his *Summa, article 53, question 1*. Alongside the significance this project holds for Henry scholarship specifically, there is a broader application to be acknowledged.

Contemporary philosophy is filled with debates about personhood. Namely, the status of being a person. The consequences of the controversy are pervasive and significant to a broad range of our current intellectual endeavors. In ethics, for example, we see concerns over the rights of a fetus or non-human animals. In modern theology, there is current importance being given to the notion of the 'Acting Person.'<sup>140</sup> Professor Christopher Tollefsen has put forth a number of impressive works on the subject of first person knowledge and persons in relation to Bioethics.<sup>141</sup> There are political/legal issues

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<sup>140</sup> See "*The Acting Person*" by Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II). *Analecta Husserliana*, 1979.

<sup>141</sup> See Reference list for his co-authored book entitled *Embryo: A Defense of Human Life*, which includes a chapter on Personhood, as well as two papers "Is a Purely First Person Account of Human Action Defensible?" and "Persons in Time".

regarding corporate personhood, ontological discussions of machines and artificial intelligence, epistemic problems of agency and performance, and so on. In Western philosophy, there are a number of definitions given for the meaning of the word “person” with no established consensus in sight. So, there is value in studying the historical development of the problem, if nothing else, in order that we might understand and take into account the different philosophical traditions now converging upon the topic. Of those traditions, perhaps, none is more influential to what we’ve inherited than that of the medieval Christian thinkers.

A forthcoming article on the subject, by Anthony F. Shaker, begins with the following observation: *“The word person conjures up the idea of an irreducibly unique individual. As natural as this association may appear to us, it hides developments that have been underway for two and half millennia. ...The medieval period brought the concept of personhood more clearly than ever within the purview of philosophical inquiry.”*<sup>142</sup> This is true because Christianity is arguably the first philosophical system to use the word “person” in its modern sense.<sup>143</sup> And the medieval period was largely a dialogue and working out between Christian, Jewish, and Islamic thinkers. Drawing on

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<sup>142</sup> “Key Philosophical Aspects of Personhood, from Ibn Sīnā to Sabzavārī,” in *Persons: A History*. Edited by Antonia LoLordo (Oxford University Press, forthcoming) (PDF Download Available).

Available from:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317003591\\_Key\\_Philosophical\\_Aspects\\_of\\_Personhood\\_from\\_Ibn\\_Sina\\_to\\_Sabzavari\\_in\\_Persons\\_A\\_History\\_Edited\\_by\\_Antonia\\_LoLordo\\_Oxford\\_University\\_Press\\_forthcoming](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317003591_Key_Philosophical_Aspects_of_Personhood_from_Ibn_Sina_to_Sabzavari_in_Persons_A_History_Edited_by_Antonia_LoLordo_Oxford_University_Press_forthcoming) [accessed Sep 3, 2017].

<sup>143</sup> Met. John Zizioulas, *Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997, pp. 27–49

its Greco-Roman roots, the word “persona” was used by early Church fathers who transferred the meaning from its original theatrical use to a more technical, theological characterization of a triune God. Tertullian’s work, *Adversus Praxean* (‘Against Praxeas’) stands as one of the first examples of this. It was later refined by Boethius and continued to be developed throughout the Middle Ages. So let us reflect upon the development in Article 53 of Henry’s *Summa*.

Boethius defined person as “a rational being of an individual nature.” And while Henry incorporates much of the Boethian tradition into his own views, he nevertheless makes a change for his own definition by substituting the notion of ‘incommunicability’ for ‘individual.’ This is representative of exactly the sort of philosophical development that Jorge Gracia attributes to the thirteenth century. Namely, a move from purely metaphysical concerns over the principle of individuation towards a more nuanced approach, sensitive to corresponding issues like the epistemological matter of indexicals, the realist/nominalist debate, and the movement towards Aristotelian logical concerns.

Comprised of ten questions concerning ‘Those Things That Pertain to the Distinction of the Persons’, the first question asks ‘Whether it is necessary to hold that there is a person in God.’ Is it necessary, Henry investigates, to think and speak of the divine in terms of personhood, or is there a better option available to us? His approach to this question consists of an examination of the 8 terms which he takes to be the most relevant and applicable possibilities available for dealing with the notion of said

distinctions in our concept of the divine. Other than the term "*persona*," which he admits has a seemingly problematic history, he considers the terms '*hoc aliquid*' (this something), '*singulare*' (singular), '*res naturae*' (natural thing), '*subsistere*' (subsistence), '*substantia*' (substance), '*suppositum*' (supposite), and '*individuum*' (individual)- asking of each 'does this term do a better job at referencing the divine, and our concept of the divine, than the term person does?'<sup>144</sup>

One by one, Henry demonstrates a weakness of each term in sufficing to capture the proper triune aspect of God's nature. Except one. '*Persona*,' he concludes, is the only term available which has a unique enough meaning to succeed in the task. It serves as a unique placeholder, linguistically and conceptually, for conveying the incommunicable aspect of the essential nature of certain created and uncreated beings.<sup>145</sup>

Hence, our analysis to accompany the exegesis. We have considered the text as it was originally intended- a classroom lecture for advanced students which would serve as a jumping off point for a larger, more sophisticated analysis of ideas. I suggest we think of this article as a textbook that Henry wrote for his students to use during the course of his teaching. Understood in this way, we can allow ourselves to imagine the sort of discussion and exercise that would have arisen from the material. Using the text

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<sup>144</sup> His first question basically sets up an exercise in an examination of terms- considering what modern philosophers might speak of as the 'connotations' of each. This is a different exercise than a purely metaphysical one- where the nature of being is the driving force for considering implications.

<sup>145</sup> This is a difficult, but sophisticated, stance to take- as it implies some level of privatization on the part of the person and an isolation from the ability to fully communicate its own essence. It sounds a bit like what more modern philosophers might refer to as 'privileged access.'

of the question as a foundation, the analysis considers the implications of what such a list of terms entails. I argue that Henry must have used this question as a way to encourage an exercise of comparison and contrast between the eight terms considered, and furthermore, that that exercise necessarily leads to a certain conclusion about the uniqueness of personhood. Without walking through those steps, ourselves, we might miss the procedural element of his argument, or worse, the ultimate force of his conclusion.

I have reconstructed what I take to be his scholastic project, based solely upon the text itself. I've done so in the following manner: by 1.) considering each term by itself and in relation to "persona," and 2.) by considering each term as it applies to different types of beings. So, for example, I lay out a comparison of supposite and person according to, and restricted to, what Henry claims about each term in this particular question. Based upon what he says, we can ask 'Are all supposites persons?' and 'Are all persons supposites?' The same exercise is carried out between individual and person, and so on, for each term included in his list. This is followed by a consideration of how the terms would apply, again based solely on Henry's presentation of each, to the divine being, a human being, and a non-rational animal. For example, is God a supposite *and* an individual *and* a person? And so on...

These two procedures, or exercises, serve to bolster the claims of my thesis. They flesh out in greater detail what may not be immediately obvious from the words of the text, but yet are nevertheless apparent when a closer look is taken. Namely, Henry's

conclusions about the uniqueness and necessity of personhood, *as a linguistic tool and conceptual framework*, for dealing with the problem of the divine nature.

The Trinitarian concerns posed by this question, alongside the philosophical problems they imply, led Henry to develop a treatment of distinctions as conceptual tools, necessary for making the proper connections between words, thoughts, and things. The need to draw mental distinctions between persons and substances, the possibility of holding persons and individuals as separate ideas, the acknowledgment of a difference between our notions of persons and natural things...These conceptual challenges require the same distinguishing capability from the language they accompany. In short, considering the distinction of the divine persons pushes Henry to consider the act of distinction itself.

In summary, we have established Henry's position in context with the traditions he inherited- demonstrating the ways in which it is an original contribution, how it is distinct from the positions held by his contemporaries, and why it represents the epistemic shift that scholars like Jorge J.E. Gracia attribute to the University system of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

I situated Henry's discussion of divine personhood alongside his teachings on relation which highlighted the difference between his treatment of a purely metaphysical issue and one which he takes to require linguistic and logical considerations.

And I have provided a thorough exegesis and analysis of the text at hand, working through his examination of the terms ... as the systematic exercise it was intended. In so doing, I've shown how the epistemic implications of the subject become an integral part of Henry's framework.

Thus, we see that Question 1, Article 53 of his *Summa* represents an unexpected epistemic sensitivity in the teachings of Henry of Ghent.

Our concept of a person, and the way we use that term to refer, has come under challenge by recent classifications of 'non-human persons,' legislative proposals that cooperation's be categorized as 'persons,' the on-going debate over when a fetus becomes a 'person,' and so on... As a result, there exists in philosophy (as well as the general public) a great deal of reflection about the ways in which this term, and our understanding of it, are developing. T. Beauchamp posits, in his article on *Problems in Theories of Metaphysical Personhood*, that the dispute is "created by the vagueness and the inherently contestable nature of the ordinary language concept of person."<sup>146</sup>

Beauchamp's writings focus mainly on the ways in which the concept of metaphysical personhood fails or succeed in comparison with contemporary concerns, such as the categorization of non-human persons. But his concerns, and those like his, may also be viewed through the lens of the medieval debate. In a similar abstract from *The Failure of Theories of Personhood*, Beauchamp states that the problem is inherent in the "common

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<sup>146</sup> Beauchamp, p.319. See also English (1975) for an early and influential analysis of this problem, as well as DeGrazia (1996, esp. pp.305-15).

sense concept of person as, roughly speaking, identical with the concept of human being.”<sup>147</sup>

Our modern concerns about the definition of person, albeit situated in different context and applied to different subject matter, are relevant to the medieval project of personhood and discussions like Henry’s on the definition of person in the context of divine persons in the Christian Trinity. Henry, as we have seen, was careful to distinguish between the object in existence, or subject of reference, and the term used to talk, and think, about that subject. We gain further understanding, through an investigation of this text, how certain roots of our contemporary concept of a person can be traced back to the Medieval period. And, whether he was correct in his theories, we can learn from his approach to the philosophical problem- namely, the importance of carefully defining our terms and distinguishing the meanings of the names we use when engaging in epistemic and metaphysical disputes alike.

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<sup>147</sup> Beauchamp, p.311.

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## APPENDIX A:

### LOOKING FORWARD- DISTINCTION IN ARTICLE 53

The Middle Ages of Western Philosophy are marked by the intersection of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic thought. And theirs was largely a conversation about the nature of God. What does it mean to speak of one, true God? How can a triune God be unified? What is the nature of God's personhood? These questions propelled the medieval debate forward, and like most rigorous philosophical pursuits, gave rise to the need for distinction. Used as a tool for refinement, the ability to draw distinctions offers the conceptual and linguistic power necessary for organizing an ever-expanding set of ideas. The schoolmen of the Medieval University not only employed the use of distinction but turned their gaze directly towards it examining the thing itself.

Henry's contribution to the matter garnered a great deal of interest from his contemporaries and sparked a great deal of debate amongst his predecessors. So, the title of article fifty-three alone, 'On Those Things That Pertain to the Distinction of the Persons,' ought to coax our curiosity. It is here that Henry moves from an examination of the term 'person' to a discussion of whether that term signifies a thing or an 'intention.' Hence, this article demonstrates a link of development between Henry's Trinitarian views and one of his most notorious ideas- what Roland Teske referred to as

‘a hallmark of Henry’s metaphysics’- the intentional distinction.<sup>148</sup> A thorough accounting of the first question in the article would be remiss not to include a preliminary acknowledgement of that link.

Henry’s teachings on distinction categorize the act, or operation, into three types according to the sorts of things they are meant to distinguish: real distinctions, rational distinctions, and intentional distinctions. Definitions of each, along with examples and category criteria, are spread throughout Henry’s writings. While there are lingering questions about subcategories and possible inconsistencies within Henry’s own use of terminology, much effort has been put forth to present a coherent summation of his very complicated conceptual schema. The following is a rough sketch of what we can say about Henry’s understanding of each distinction type:

I. Real Distinction (*distinctio realis*)

Henry defines a real distinction as the sort of distinction between things (*res*), that is, between two substances or between a substance and its quality or quantity. (Either as absolute from both sides or relative from one side.) The criteria for a real distinction is met when really different things must imply diverse natures or essences, whether simple or composite, in terms of reality. Really similar things must imply the same thing, such that one does not add anything real to the other. By ‘thing’ Henry means here “whatever is some absolute nature and essence that has an exemplar idea in God, able to come into existence by the divine operation.”<sup>149</sup> (P.236n45) Such a thing is a thing

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<sup>148</sup> Teske, 2006.

<sup>149</sup> Teske 2006, pp. 233 and 236n45.

derived from ratification or validation; it has being of essence (insofar as God is its exemplary cause), but does not have being of existence unless God causes it to exist in reality through efficient causality. For example, composites, like man and donkey, or principles of composites, like matter and form. A definition and the thing defined are examples of real sameness. Likewise, the divine attributes are really the same. A dog and a houseplant, however, are really distinct.

Relations are not things. Hence, a relation is distinct from the substance that has being only intentionally, not really. By 'real' Henry means 'having possible existence.'<sup>150</sup> (Which is different from the use of the term by Aquinas to imply 'actual existence.')

Henry refers to a real distinction between essence and existence as compared with Aquinas and Giles of Rome. Matters are complicated by Henry's views on metaphysics and physics- the former considering primary essences, the latter devoted to really existing things. "Separability and inseparability are tied to the various sorts of distinctions and provide quite different grounds for a real distinction at the metaphysical and the physical planes of consideration."<sup>151</sup>

## II. Rational Distinction (*distinctio rationalis*)

Henry defines a rational distinction as the sort of distinction that is purely mental or in no way real. Things that are distinct merely rationally can be mutually predicated of each other. There must be inseparability in reality and in the mind for two things to be

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<sup>150</sup> Teske 2006, p.237 from *Quodlibet* 5.6.

<sup>151</sup> J. Paulus, pp.228-9.

considered rationally distinct.<sup>152</sup> An example of this would be the divine attributes, which are really identical, are only rationally distinct. A definition and the thing defined are only rationally distinct. Henry also seems to categorize relation and divine essence as rational distinctions.<sup>153</sup> (Here, reason is used in a technical sense, and does not include ‘a certain cognitive power of an intellectual substance from which our soul is called rational,’ nor does it mean ‘reason in accord with certitude about something doubtful.’

### III. Intentional Distinction (*distinctio intentionalis*)

Henry defines an intentional distinction as a distinction between two intentions in a single thing, one of which does not include the other. An intention (as Henry uses the term) is a note, or trait, of the essential content of a *res*, which does not differ from it in any real sense, nor from its other identifiable notes, yet can nevertheless be expressed by an independent concept.<sup>154</sup>) The intentions really exist in the *res*, but potentially, whereas the distinction is an operation of the intellect alone. Things that differ intentionally are really the same but differ insofar as the mind forms different concepts of them, yet concepts that cannot be predicated of each other, and therefore, are not purely rational distinctions. ‘Intentions and the intentional distinction thus track the

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<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*, pp.229-230.

<sup>153</sup> Teske 2006, p. 240.

<sup>154</sup> “But here an intention is called something really pertaining to the simplicity of an essence, which can be separately conceived without something else, from which it does not differ by an absolute thing and which pertains to the same thing. Hence, an intention is said to be a tending within (*intus tentio*), because by its concept the mind tends to something that is in a thing and not to something else that is something pertaining to the same thing. And in that way the intellect, to which it pertains to divide those things that are the same in reality, forms diverse concepts of the same thing, as concerning elements diverse within the conception of the mind, but concerning ones the same in reality.” (N55p238)

internal ontological structure of an object.’<sup>155</sup> Henry scholars now agree that the idea of an intentional distinction is tributary to Avicenna, the terminology having been taken directly from Avicenna’s *Metaphysics*. (chapter 5, book 1) (ftnt.82)

Intentional difference applies to inseparability in the same thing but separability in different things.<sup>156</sup> “A diversity of intentions can exist only between those that are united according to reality so that the concept of one completely excludes the concept of the other.”<sup>157</sup> In this way, the intentional distinction looks identical to the rational, purely logical, type. The only difference is that in the intentional cases, one of the concepts excludes the other (can be thought of separately/independently from each other), whereas the concepts of a rational distinction are compatible. So, this means (as Henry was aware) that everything that differs in intention also differs in reason, but not vice versa. Examples include diverse differences in one species, like vegetative and sensitive elements, which cannot be separated from the individual animal, but can be separated from other animals and plants. ‘Animal’ and ‘rational’ are intentionally distinct in a single human being. So, the intentional distinction is not necessarily just an intermediate stage between the real and purely rational types.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Brill, 2011. p.206, notes 77 and 78.

<sup>156</sup> Teske 2006, p.234, n37.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p.240, n67.

<sup>158</sup> The standard organization of medieval theories of distinction parallels Henry of Ghent and Thomas Aquinas as realist representations in opposition to the nominalistic notions of John Duns Scotus. While this is, by and large, a correct categorization, it ought not exclude the ways in which Henry’s ‘intentional’ distinction compares to the ‘formal’ distinction put forth by Scotus. (\*\*support- Brill p.208-9 + ftnt 91) Ludwig Hodl, p206: “intention also means that formal element of meaning of the essence without which the essence cannot be understood...The intentional distinction is not real, nor purely rational. It ranks as formal.”

Given the above schema, the subject of article fifty-three raises the question 'What sort of distinction is the distinction of a person?' Does Henry understand the case of the divine persons as representing a real, rational, or intentional distinction? Because his categorizations are based upon the things they distinguish, answering this question should also provide an account of Henry's notion of personhood as it fits into his metaphysical ontology. Does he view it as a thing or a figment of the mind, or something else? Unpacking these questions requires us to extend our reach beyond the first question, and is therefore, beyond the scope of this project. But question one bears valuable fruit nonetheless. Besides containing an unexpected epistemic turn, it establishes a point of intersection between some of Henry's most significant ideas- his notion of relation, his understanding of individuation, his view of personhood, and his teachings on the intentional distinction. It is interesting where this initial examination of the eight terms leads. In question five, Henry takes up the matter of whether 'person' signifies a thing or an intention and this early treatment of the uniqueness of personhood becomes the groundwork for his solution.

## APPENDIX B:

### POINTS OF INTEREST FOR FURTHER STUDY

As the first formal exegesis and analysis to be undertaken of Henry's *Summa (Quaestiones Ordinariae)*, art. 53, question 1, the future of the project is multi-faceted. First and foremost, it contributes to a fuller and more accurate understanding of the teachings and writings of Henry of Ghent, namely his philosophical treatment of 'person.' But there are several other interesting ideas emerging from the lines of this project. While they are beyond the scope of our purposes here, I would be remiss not to point them out.

I include here a brief mention of the following points for further consideration:

- I. Medieval Notions of Form & Matter
- II. Abelard & Henry as Nominalists?
- III. Ongoing Disputes About Relation
- IV. Henry as an Empirical Realist?
- V. Concept Formation
- VI. From 'Persona' to Personal Identity

## I. Medieval Notions of Form and Matter

One such theme is that of the relationship between body and soul, or more precisely for medieval thinkers, between matter and form. Much has been written about Descartes' debt to Medieval philosophy, so I will not make that case here. But, it is important, in those discussions to acknowledge the Scholastic tradition with accuracy. Given the attention paid to Descartes' response to Scotus and Ockham, and furthermore, their being influenced by Henry, it stands to reason that those inquiries should also take Henry's teachings into serious account as a point of development in the philosophical treatment of form and matter. In attempting to reconcile Augustine and Aristotle (with others, mentioned here) Henry posits a theory of matter and form as a hylomorphic compound. While it has been well established what he has to say regarding the human being and divine persons elsewhere (taken from those texts available), his discussion of the divine persons in art.53 is certainly relevant to his overall thoughts on the issue of person and the unity of essence. And, therefore, should be included in these studies.

Just as modern thinkers have inherited the dualistic account of Descartes, Henry and his medieval contemporaries inherited a dualistic form of Platonism, which defined the human being as a 'rational soul using a mortal body,' thereby distinguishing between the material and immaterial elements assumed in that understanding of the person. Yet, Henry also inherited Augustine and Aquinas' rejections of that dualism- due to concerns over the interaction of separate/distinct substances. While these concerns will eventually lead to the philosophical materialists, Henry provides a unique

perspective of a transitional moment in the discussion, namely the metaphysics of hylomorphic compounds. In his oft-cited work, *Body and Soul*, Peter King pays special attention to what Henry has to say about this issue, stating that his is a particularly 'instructive case.' As King notes, Henry's development of a full theory of the plurality of substantial forms in human beings (of which I argue his discussions of divine persons relate) represents an effort, in the final years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, 'to clarify the Augustinian solution and make it precise in an Aristotelian framework...as part of the larger project of getting clear about the metaphysics of form/matter composites.' We see this taking place in article 53, regarding the definition of person when applied to the divine.

## II. Abelard and Universals

Abelard is considered one of the first examples of nominalism, or perhaps more accurately irrealism<sup>159</sup>, in the Western tradition. In defense of his theory of universals, Abelard argued that there cannot be any real object in the world which could satisfy Boethius's criteria for the property, and therefore, universality is not an ontological feature of the world but a semantic feature of language. This lies at the heart of Abelard's metaphysics, but clearly, also develops what we might now describe as his philosophy of language. The notion that 'universals are nothing more than words' raised the objection that common names, if not the names of common items, would be rendered meaningless. (This is where Abelard thought his teacher, Roscelin had gone astray by holding that universals were 'mere mouth noises.') Abelard is careful, to avoid

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<sup>159</sup> See P. King, 2015, section 2: Metaphysics.

the same mistake, to distinguish between the semantic property of a names reference (*nominatio*- what the term applies to) and that of its sense (*significatio*- what hearing the term suggests; or *doctrino*- the informational content of the concept which is meant to be conveyed). In this way, Abelard's philosophy of language is then linked with his notion of concept formation/intellect, and therefore, a certain philosophy of mind. This is, interestingly, like the epistemological sensitivities we see Henry demonstrating in his discussion of the divine persons. When claiming what he does about universals as a linguistic phenomenon, Abelard gives a 'contextual explication of intentionality that relies on a linguistic account of mental representation, adopting a principle of compositionality for understanding.'<sup>160</sup> He concludes that mental images must have an instrumental role in the thought process, but only as intermediary signs of things (*intersigna rerum*). Intentionality derives, instead, from the act of attention directed towards the mental image. Again, a similar treatment of names and signification is seen in article 53.

These theories kept Abelard in contention long after his death, including their mention (albeit not by direct reference) in the Condemnation of 1277- of which Henry was a part of composing! And, in his own lifetime, Abelard engaged in debates with the anti-dialecticians. Bernard of Clairvaux, and others, claimed that the meaning of a proposition of the faith, to the extent that it can be grasped, is plain and without the need of aid from reason. Abelard, despite the contention, continued his attempt to show how religious claims can be understood, and how the applications of dialectical

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid. section 5.

methods might help in that development. (This is similar to Richard of St. Victor, and what we see in article 53 of Henry's *Summa*.)

Besides the conflict over reason, there were also Trinitarian implications to Abelard's nominalism which were viewed as problematic/heretical by the Church and certain University Masters. In matters of the Trinity, Abelard concluded that Boethius' account of identity needed work if it was to accurately capture the true nature of the divine. Derived from Boethius, this traditional account holds that things may be either generically, specifically, or numerically the same or different. Abelard categorizes identity by four modes: essential sameness and difference, (closely tied to essential...) numerical sameness and difference, definitional sameness and difference, and sameness and difference in property. He held that two things are the same in essence when they are numerically the same concrete thing, and essentially different otherwise. Yet, noted, numerical difference does not match up precisely with essential difference. According to Abelard, since things may be neither the same nor different, numerically, the question 'How many things are there?' is ill-formed. When this is applied to the Trinity the result is: three persons who are essentially the same as one another, (same concrete thing- God) but differ in definition (what it is to be the Father is different from the Son). The persons are numerically different from one another though and each have at least one unique property from the others. This path through metaphysics, language, and mind- applied to the Trinity- is quite similar to what we find in Henry's *Summa*, art.53. Though, to my knowledge, no one has pointed this out or examined the correlation in a formal capacity. Now that this study has been undertaken, such a

comparison is possible, and would be an interesting opportunity for a deeper analysis of both thinkers.

### III. Ongoing Disputes About Relation

I believe Henry's discussion in this text is pertinent to the recent work of Scott M. Williams. In his 2012 article, *Henry of Ghent on Real Relations and the Trinity: The Case for Numerical Sameness Without Identity*, Williams argues that "there is a hitherto unrecognized connection between Henry of Ghent's general theory of real relations and his Trinitarian theology, namely the notion of numerical sameness without identity. Critiquing the debate between Mark Henninger and Jos Decorte concerning the nature of the divine persons of the Trinity, Williams makes the case that Henninger's articulation of relation is to be preferred as more consistent with Henry's own understanding of the term. While Williams's paper focuses specifically on Henry's notion of relation, the same arguments might be extended to his notion of personhood in a similar manner. Getting clear on Henry's teachings about the divine person in this section of the *Summa* (which is not mentioned by Williams) would certainly help to clarify and add textual support to one side of this debate or the other. (I believe it adds credence to Henninger's articulation of Henry's notion of relation, while may complicate certain statements that Williams makes about Henry's use of the term 'person' more generally.) I do not believe, taking this portion of text as an example, that we can say yet, with absolute certainty, what Henry's definitive understanding of 'person' was, or if he even fully developed a consistent theory as such. I think studies like these (as well as Williams') are necessary, though, for moving us in that direction.

#### IV. Henry As An Empirical Realist?

Another interesting possibility for further research which has arisen from this study is, as mentioned earlier, the connection between the mind/body dualism of Descartes and the form/matter composition that Henry constructs. In an article of *Franziskanische Studien*, Gordon Wilson considers a relation between Henry's theory of the unity of Man to Descartes' unity of composition.<sup>161</sup> Wilson concludes with this observation: 'It certainly is not contended here that either (Henry/Descartes) fully elaborated or that either thinker was fully conscious of the direction to which his thought was leading him. Yet within the philosophies of both thinkers there is an undeniable, although not elaborated, suggestion of the doctrine of what Kant would describe as empirical realism.' Having now examined Henry's treatment of the divine persons in article 53 of his *Summa*, we may be able to say that Henry was more aware of such implications than once assumed.<sup>162</sup> Or, at the very least, have more textual support with which to consider the possibility.

#### V. Concept Formation

The issue of personhood impacts Henry's thoughts on concept formation since the second person of the Trinity is, of course, the 'Word.' Henry understood the human ability to form concepts as related to the Fathers ability to produce the Word. (The Father does not actually have vocal chords, so this word is purely conceptual.) This connection, albeit interesting, is beyond the scope of our project here. But I mention it

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<sup>161</sup> Wilson, G.A. *Henry of Ghent and Rene Descartes on the Unity of Man*, in: *Franzisk Stud.* 64, 1982, 97-110.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p.110, n.49.

as an aside since it may be another, unexpected epistemological ramification of Henry's Trinitarian thought. For further insight into Henry's thought on the subject, I recommend the following works by Russel Friedman, Bernd Goehring, and Juan Carlos Flores (All of whom have contributed a helpful clarity to this very complicated subject.):

FRIEDMAN, R.

- *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham* Cambridge 2010.

FLORES, J. C.

- "Intellect and Will as Natural Principles," in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought: Studies in Memory of Jos Decorte*, edd. Guy Guldentops and Carlos Steel, (Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2003), pp. 277- 306.
- *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity*, (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series 1) XXVI (Leuven, 2006), viii+239pp.
- "Henry of Ghent on the Trinity" in *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, vol. 23), ed. Gordon Wilson (Leiden, 2011), pp. 135-150.

GOEHRING, B.

- *Henry of Ghent on Cognition and Mental Representation*, Cornell University, (diss.) 2006.
- "Intelligit se intelligere rem intellectam: Henry of Ghent on Thought and Reflexivity," in *Quaestio: The Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 10, (2010), pp. 111- 133.
- "Henry of Ghent on the *Verbum Mentis*" in *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, vol. 23), ed. Gordon Wilson (Leiden, 2011), pp. 241-272.
- "Henry of Ghent on Human Knowledge and Its Limits," in *Quaestio: The Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 12, (2012), pp. 25-49.
- "Henry of Ghent's Use of Aristotle's *De anima* in Developing His Theory of Cognition," in *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle's De Anima*, eds. Russel FRIEDMAN and Jean-Michel COUNET, (Philosophes Médiévaux) 58 (Leuven – Paris, 2013), pp.63-99.

## VI. From 'Persona' to Personal Identity

This project, including the text with which it is engaged, is fundamentally a study of personhood. By personhood, I mean that it involves a philosophical approach to the problem of personal identity. This is, both historically and analytically, a very complicated, broad-reaching problem and many approaches to it have been taken. One may, for example, take the problem of personal identity to involve metaphysical questions about the nature of a person, i.e. questions like 'Who am I?' or 'What am I constituted of?' Or, one may refer to personal-identity in terms of persistence (what does it take for a person to remain the same through time?), evidence (how do we find out who is who?), difference (Could I have been other than I am?), or the ethical (Why does it matter?). Personal identity, rather than being a straightforward, simple problem, is really a myriad of loosely connected ones. In his *Summa*, article 53, q.1 Henry approaches the problem from the standpoint of personhood- essentially, asking for the definition of the word person. (For example, what is it to be a person? Or, what is necessary and suffices for something to be called a person rather than something else?)

We see, in question 1, Henry considering this question in terms of the divine persons, namely, can we say that the divine is a person/s. Besides being concerned with the definition of person, we might say that Henry is also concerned with issues of population, insofar as he is asking how many persons may populate a single essence, or to be precise, how can a monotheistic God be considered as a triune compound of persons? (In contemporary scholarship, this is sometimes called 'synchronic identity'.

See Stanford Personhood). The notion of personhood, for today's society (rather than just those who are engaged with the historical/medieval discussions above), is of utmost importance and expanding in the subject matter to which it applies.