

# HENRY OF GHENT ON REAL RELATIONS AND THE TRINITY: THE CASE FOR NUMERICAL SAMENESS WITHOUT IDENTITY

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## *Abstract*

I argue 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. A real relation (*relatio*) is numerically the same thing (*res*) as its absolute (non-relative) foundation, without being identical to its foundation. This not only holds for creaturely real relations but also for the divine persons' distinguishing real relations. A divine person who is constituted by a real relation (*relatio*) and the divine essence is numerically the same thing (*res*) as the divine essence without being identical to it. Further, I compare Mark Henninger's and Jos Decorte's interpretations of Henry's general theory of real relations and show that Henninger's is to be preferred and how it is consistent with my interpretation. I argue that the difficulty with Decorte's interpretation stems, in part, from his misrepresentation of Henry's Trinitarian theology. Subsequently, I fill in some missing pieces to Decorte's presentation of Henry's Trinitarian theology, and this in turn shows why Henninger's interpretation in conjunction with mine is to be preferred.

## 1. *Introduction*

According to traditional Christian theology there are (some sort of) relations that distinguish three divine persons. The first divine person is the Father of the second divine person, the second divine person is the Son of the first divine person, and the third divine person is the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son. The terms 'father of' and 'son of' are relative, and so Christian theologians have the task to explain in what these relations consist. Unsurprisingly, medieval theologians give different explanations of the distinction of the divine persons, in part, because of their different theories of real relations. Nonetheless,

it is often difficult to know whether a general theory of real relations is developed and then applied to this Trinitarian question, or if a theory of real relations is developed within the context of this Trinitarian question and then expanded to a general theory of real relations. Whichever is the case, what is clear is that medieval theologians typically argue for a general theory of real relations and argue for a particular response to the Trinitarian question about the unity and distinction of the divine persons. We might say that scholastic theories of real relations are often tied up with this Trinitarian question because Christians traditionally believe that the divine persons are distinct because of (some sort of) relations.

Contemporary commentators on medieval theories of real relations are often, though not always, faced with the question of whether this Trinitarian issue and a medieval philosophical theologian's response to it informs—in any significant way—the medieval philosopher's general theory of real relations. One commentator of Henry of Ghent's account of real relations, Mark Henninger, has presented Henry's general theory of real relations independently of Henry's application of it to this Trinitarian question. Jos Decorte has criticized Henninger's presentation for not taking this theological context into account, and in turn suggests that Henninger's omission of the Trinitarian context adversely affects the adequacy of Henninger's interpretation. Subsequently, Decorte aims to fill this (apparent) lacuna in Henninger's interpretation by surveying Henry's response to this Trinitarian question and then to apply what we learn from the Trinitarian context to Henry's general theory of real relations. Thus, Decorte claims to have improved upon Henninger's interpretation of Henry of Ghent's account of real relations.

In what follows I argue that Decorte's presentation of Henry's Trinitarian theology does not add anything that improves upon Henninger's interpretation. Moreover, I show that Decorte's presentation of Henry's Trinitarian theology in fact obscures Henry's general theory of real relations. Nevertheless, I concede that something from Henry's Trinitarian theology is missing from Henninger's interpretation. What is missing from Henninger's interpretation is a theologically felicitous description of the connection between a real relation (*relatio*) and its absolute foundation (*res*). Given such a felicitous description, we would see more easily the way in which Henry takes

himself to have successfully tested his general theory of real relations by this Trinitarian case. This more felicitous description adds to, but does not (aim to) replace, Henninger's interpretation.

I will argue that for Henry a categorial real relation (*relatio*) [= CRR] is numerically the same thing (*res*) as, without being identical to, its foundation. This holds for all real relations, divine and created. Having argued for my interpretation of Henry's general theory of CRRs, I show that Henninger's interpretation is, but Decorte's is not, consistent with my theologically felicitous description of the connection between a real relation and its foundation.

In section 2 below I introduce the general notion of numerical sameness without identity by way of a contemporary discussion by Michael Rea. In section 3 I survey Henry of Ghent's general theory of CRRs and in section 4 argue for my interpretation. In section 5 I compare Henninger's and Decorte's interpretations and show that Henninger's in conjunction with mine is to be preferred. In section 6 I discuss some implications of Henry's general theory of real relations for his Trinitarian theology, and examine some ways in which Decorte's interpretation of Henry's theory of real relations and Trinitarian theology is inadequate, and how this has led to some recent misrepresentations of Henry's Trinitarian theology more broadly.

## 2. *Numerical Sameness without Identity*

Before I begin with Henry of Ghent's general theory of real relations I want to give a rough account of what numerical sameness without identity amounts to. For I will argue that for Henry a real relation is numerically the same 'thing' as its foundation without being identical to its foundation. (I discuss what Henry means by a 'thing' in the following section.) Once we have a working notion of numerical sameness without identity, I will have laid the ground for my interpretation of Henry's general theory of real relations.

The notion of numerical sameness without identity has been developed and deployed recently by Michael Rea to address philosophical and theological questions. He derives this notion from Aristotle's account of accidental sameness; but for my purposes I focus on Rea's presentation of it. Having explained numerical sameness without identity and then

using it to address the problem of material constitution,<sup>1</sup> Rea in conjunction with Jeffrey Brower have applied it to the theological question of the unity and distinction of the divine persons.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Rea has recently used this notion for understanding the incarnation of God the Son,<sup>3</sup> and Brower has used it to address the problem of temporary intrinsics.<sup>4</sup> I take these diverse applications as *prima facie* evidence for the generality of the notion of numerical sameness without identity. Below I explain this general notion by way of Rea's and Brower's joint presentation of it with regard to the issue of material constitution.

To get at the problem of material constitution Rea and Brower have us consider the case of a bronze statue of Athena.<sup>5</sup> Are there two material objects that fill the region of space-time *R* where this bronze statue of Athena is, or one material object? Some contemporary philosophers argue that there are two material objects that overlap in exactly the same *R*: the lump of bronze and the Athena-shaped bronze statue.<sup>6</sup> But Rea and Brower contend that there is just one material object in that region *R*: the bronze statue of Athena. They appeal to the common sense intuition that the lump of bronze and the Athena-shaped bronze statue are numerically the same material object in *R*. But they go on to argue that the bronze and the Athena-shaped bronze statue are not identical in the Leibnizian sense of identity. One test for whether *x* and *y* are identical is that if *x* and *y* have exactly the same modal properties and persistence conditions, then *x* and *y* are identical; if not, then they are not identical. It would seem that the lump of bronze and the Athena-shaped bronze statue are not identical because they do not pass this test for identity. The bronze statue of Athena can be melted down and recast into a bronze statue

1. M. REA, "Sameness without Identity: An Aristotelian Solution to the Problem of Material Constitution," in: *Ratio* (new series) 11 (1998), pp. 316-328.

2. J. BROWER and M. REA, "Material Constitution and the Trinity," in: *Faith and Philosophy* 22 (2005), pp. 57-76. Also, J. BROWER, "Trinity," in: J. BROWER – K. GUILFOY (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Peter Abelard*, New York 2004, pp. 223-257.

3. M. REA, "Hylomorphism and the Incarnation," in: A. MARMADORA – J. HILL (eds.), *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, Oxford 2011, pp. 134-152.

4. J. BROWER, "Aristotelian Endurantism: A New Solution to the Problem of Temporary Intrinsics," in: *Mind* 119 (2010), pp. 883-905.

5. See notes 1 and 2.

6. See J. BROWER and M. REA, "Material Constitution and the Trinity," pp. 61-68 and references there.

of David. Whereas the lump of bronze persists through the destruction of the Athena-shaped bronze statue, the Athena-shaped bronze statue does not. The lump of bronze and the Athena-shaped statue do not have exactly the same modal properties and persistence conditions because the lump of bronze *can* persist through the destruction of the Athena-shaped bronze statue, but the Athena-shaped bronze statue *cannot* so persist. Thus, the lump of bronze and the Athena-shaped bronze statue are not identical.

In their joint article, Rea and Brower discuss another example to clarify what it means to talk about numerically the same material object. They consider the case of Socrates who was standing at time  $t_1$  and is sitting at  $t_2$ .<sup>7</sup> Socrates is a material object, and at  $t_1$  Socrates and standing-Socrates are (contingently) numerically the same material object without being identical, likewise for Socrates and seated-Socrates at  $t_2$ . In both cases, Socrates is numerically one material object that is contingently (accidentally) numerically the same material object as standing-Socrates or seated-Socrates (at different times).

In applying the notion of numerical sameness without identity to the Trinity, Rea and Brower suggest that the divine essence or nature is analogous to the bronze (or to Socrates), and each divine person (e.g., Father) is analogous to the Athena-shaped bronze statue (or to, e.g., standing-Socrates). The analogy goes like this: just as the Athena-shaped bronze statue is numerically the same material object as—without being identical to—the lump of bronze, so too is a divine person numerically the same immaterial object as the divine essence or nature without being identical to it. Moreover, given orthodox Trinitarian theology, Rea and Brower say that the divine persons are not contingently numerically the same immaterial object as the divine essence, but rather are essentially numerically the same immaterial object. The distinction between contingent and essential numerical sameness without identity leads to a schema for the copula (discussed below).

Although Rea and Brower distinguish between identity and numerical sameness without identity, they concede that both fall under the genus of the 'is' of numerical sameness.<sup>8</sup> After all, if  $x$  and  $y$  are

7. J. BROWER and M. REA, "Material Constitution and the Trinity," pp. 60-61.

8. J. BROWER and M. REA, "Material Constitution and the Trinity," p. 71.

identical, then they are numerically the same thing. Consequently, Rea and Brower propose two generic senses of the copula: (I) the 'is' of predication (e.g., "Socrates is wise") and (II) the 'is' of numerical sameness. The latter is then divided into (A) the 'is' of identity (e.g., "Cicero is Tully") and (B) the 'is' of numerical sameness without identity. Lastly, the 'is' of numerical sameness without identity is divided into (i) the 'is' of accidental (contingent) sameness (e.g., "Athena is bronze") and (ii) the 'is' of essential sameness (e.g., "The Father is God"). Given their wish to propose a theory consistent with Christian orthodoxy, Rea and Brower say that the 'is' of essential numerical sameness without identity is the type of sameness that obtains in the case of the divine essence and persons. Statements like "The Father is God" should be interpreted as "The Father is essentially numerically the same immaterial object as God without being identical to God".

A feature of Rea and Brower's proposal that is theologically appealing is that it blocks the traditional objection from the transitivity of identity. The objection goes as follows. If (1) the Father is God, (2) the Son is God, and (3) there is one God, then (4) the Father is the Son. But on Rea and Brower's reckoning, (4) does not follow from the conjunction of (1)-(3) because the copula in (1)-(3) is not the 'is' of identity, but the 'is' of essential numerical sameness without identity.

Before moving onto Henry's general theory of real relations it is important to emphasize the flexibility of the notion of numerical sameness without identity. Rea uses this notion to address the problem of material constitution, the Trinity, and the Incarnation; and in addition Brower uses it to address the problem of temporary intrinsics. Whether one wishes to use this notion to address various philosophical or theological questions is another issue. The flexibility of the notion of numerical sameness without identity will be important for my interpretation of Henry of Ghent's general theory of real relations.

When considering the notion of numerical sameness without identity we might ask, "numerically the same *what?*". When Rea and Brower discuss the example of the Athena-shaped bronze statue, they say that the Athena-shaped statue and the lump of bronze are numerically the same *material object* (without identity). When Rea and Brower turn their attention to the Trinity, they say that the divine persons are numerically the same *immaterial object* (without identity)

as the divine nature and each other. Given the flexibility of the notion of numerical sameness without identity, one could answer the question, “numerically the same *what?*”, in different ways depending on the issue and one’s metaphysics regarding that issue. In my interpretation of Henry of Ghent’s general theory of real relations I will argue that for Henry a real relation and its absolute foundation are numerically the same *thing* (*res*) without being identical. In the next section I turn to Henry’s general theory of real relations and what he means by a ‘thing’ (*res*).

(In my discussion of Rea and Brower above I do not mean to imply that Henry of Ghent would agree with their assessment of the Athena-shaped bronze statue and the lump of bronze. I am not even considering Henry’s metaphysics of hylomorphic compounds. My summary of Rea and Brower’s analysis of hylomorphic compounds serves as an illustration of the general notion of numerical sameness without identity.)

### 3. *Categorial Real Relations (CRRs) according to Henry of Ghent*

It is well known that there is a diversity of views among medieval philosophers regarding categorial real relations [= CRRs]. Some medieval philosophers have a reductionist account of relations “according to which the properties in question are accidents falling under categories other than relation.”<sup>9</sup> On this reductionist view, relations are mind-dependent items, and what makes statements about relations true are items that fall under a category other than the category of relation. For example, Ockham argues that similarity relations are reducible to items in the category of quality.<sup>10</sup> However, other medieval philosophers have a non-reductive account of real relations according to which “[real] relations are accidents of a *sui generis* type.”<sup>11</sup> On this non-reductionist view real relations are mind-independent; what

9. J. BROWER, “Medieval Theories of Relations,” in: E.N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010 Edition), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/relations-medieval/>>.

10. Cf. WILLIAM OF OCKHAM, *Ordinatio*, I, 30, 2 (*Opera Theologica*, vol. 4, p. 334, 10 – 23). See also M. HENNINGER, *Relations: Medieval Theories 1250-1325*, Oxford 1989, pp. 127 – 135 [henceforth *Relations*].

11. J. BROWER, “Medieval Theories of Relations.”

makes statements about real relations true is some item that falls under the ontological category of relation. Below I survey Henry of Ghent's non-reductionist account of real relations.

There are different ways that medieval philosophers explain in what these mind-independent relative items consist. From Henry's earliest discussions of CRRs to his latest discussions,<sup>12</sup> he proposes that what makes a CRR an extra-mental item is its own existence—i.e., being toward another (*esse ad aliud*)—that is not reducible to, or identical to, the existence of its absolute foundation (i.e., substance, quantity, or quality). Henry's proposal that a CRR requires its own being (*esse ad aliud*) distinct from its foundation's being sets him apart from his predecessor Thomas Aquinas. For Aquinas a CRR's being (*esse*) just is the being of its absolute foundation—a CRR does not have its own being that is not identical to the being of its absolute foundation. Aquinas distinguishes between the being (*esse*) of a CRR and its quiddity (*ratio*)—toward another (*ad aliud*)—that are necessary and jointly sufficient for a CRR. A CRR's being is identical to its foundation's being, but not its quiddity.<sup>13</sup> Whereas Aquinas says that a CRR's being (*esse*) just is its absolute foundation's being, Henry says that a CRR must have its own being (*esse*) that is not reducible to, or identical to, its absolute foundation's being (*esse*). Summarizing Henry of Ghent's position we can say that a real relation, *CRR*, obtains only if a *CRR* is a being toward another (*esse ad*

12. For Henry's earliest discussions of real relations, cf. *Quodlibet* III, 4, ed. I. BADIUS, Paris 1518, fols. 51rM-53vV [henceforth *QL*.]; and *Summa*, 32, 5, ed. R. MACKEN, Leuven 1991, pp. 79, 14 – 93, 98. For discussion of these two texts cf. J. DECORTE, "Relatio as Modus Essendi: The Origins of Henry of Ghent's Definition of Relation," in: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 10 (2002), pp. 317-319, 323-324. For an extensive list of early, middle, and late texts cf. M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 42, note 5.

13. I am summarizing the interpretation of M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, pp. 23-31. Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, I, 26, 2, 1, sol., ed. P. MANDONNET, Paris 1929, p. 630 (emphasis mine): "Et ad huius intellectum sciendum est, quod, ut supra dictum est [cf. d. 8, q. 4, a. 3], in relatione, sicut in omnibus accidentibus, *est duo considerare: scilicet esse suum*, secundum quod ponit aliquid in ipso, prout est accidens; *et rationem suam*, secundum quam ad aliud refertur, ex qua in genere determinato collocatur. [...] [Relationes] [qu]aedam enim sunt quae habent aliquid in re, supra quod esse eorum fundatur, sicut aequalitas fundatur supra quantitatem; et huiusmodi relationes aliquid realiter in re sunt." Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Super Sent.*, I, 26, 2, 1, ad 3; *De Pot.*, 7, 8, ad 5; 7, 9, ad 7; all cited in M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 17, note 16. See also T. WARD, "Relations without Forms: Some Consequences of Aquinas's Metaphysics of Relations," in: *Vivarium* 48 (2010), pp. 282-290.



*aliud*) that is not identical to, or reducible to, the being of any other categorial item (e.g., substance, quantity, quality).<sup>14</sup>

According to Henry of Ghent, what distinguishes the category of relation, i.e., the most general genus of relation, from other categories is that the category of relation is being toward another (*esse ad aliud*).<sup>15</sup> Henry consistently claims that there are three ways or modes of being: being in itself (*esse in se*), being in another (*esse in aliud*), and being toward another (*esse ad aliud*). Substances exist in themselves (*esse in se*), the absolute accidents of quantity and quality exist in another (*esse in aliud*)—i.e., in a substance,<sup>16</sup> and real relations exist toward another (*esse ad aliud*).

14. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa Quaestionum Ordinariarum* [henceforth *Summa*], 63, 2, ed. I. BADIUS, Paris 1520, fol. 196vB: “Dicuntur autem relatiua secundum esse illa quae non solum secundum dictionem, sed etiam secundum hoc ipsum quod sunt, ad aliud dicuntur, et non solum dicuntur ad aliud, sed etiam ad aliud sunt; et hoc quia esse eorum non est solum cum respectu, sed est relatio quaedam et respectus, non quo aliquid dicitur tantum ad aliud, sed quo adhuc habet ad aliud esse; unde et dicuntur relatiua secundum esse, et hoc largo modo sumendo esse ad esse quo aliquid habet esse perfectum extra animam.” Also *Summa*, 63, 3, fol. 198rL: “Sic relatio simpliciter ratione modi qui est ad aliud esse ut indistincte considerata circa indistinctas res praedicamentorum absolutorum aut praedicamenta relationum quae sunt ad aliud, siue relatiua, est genus et rationem generis habens.” For a helpful discussion comparing Henry’s to Aquinas’s theory of relation cf. R.L. FRIEDMAN, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 46–49.

15. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 52rR: “Ex omnibus iam declaratis hoc solum assumimus ad praesentem quaestionem quod relatiua per se et secundum essentiam de quibus principaliter intendit praesens quaestio duo esse habent. Vnum quo habent rationem accidentis et hoc ratione accidentis absoluti super quod fundantur relationes ipsae. Alterum uero quo habent ad aliud esse, et hoc ratione sui generis distincti contra alia genera.” Also *Summa*, 63, 3, fol. 198rL: “relatio proprium habet de ratione sui praedicamenti ut ipsum distinctum est omnino a quolibet alio praedicamenti et nihil communis est alicuius quod est alterius praedicamenti, non est nisi ratio quaedam quae est ad aliud esse, quemadmodum ratio praedicamentorum absolutorum communis differens a ratione propria praedicamenti relationis quae est ad aliud esse, est ad se siue secundum se esse.” Also *Summa*, 66, 1, fol. 209vK: “Qui quidem modi reales sunt quia ex natura ipsius rei praedicamenti concomitantur, non autem ex consideratione intellectus siue rationis, immo ex illis consequuntur diuersi modi conceptuum formarum de ipsis rebus. Illorum autem modorum duo sunt primi et principales, quorum primus est modus essendi secundum se et absolute, secundus uero est modus essendi in ordine ad aliud.”

16. Henry goes on to distinguish between two incompatible ways of inherence, namely affecting and measuring. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* VII, 2, ed. G.A. WILSON, Leuven 1991, pp. 28, 97 – 29, 99; p. 29, 14 – 21 (cited in HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 51): “Istorum autem trium modorum essendi duo primi ita sunt diuersi quod omnino repugnant, nec possunt fieri circa eandem rem. Ei enim rei cui convenit esse in se nullo modo potest conuenire esse in alio. [...] Esse autem in alio per inhaerentiam distinguitur in duo

Furthermore, Henry claims that the only CRRs that exist extramentally are specific CRRs.<sup>17</sup> But what contracts or determines this most general genus—being toward another—such that there is a most specific kind of CRR? For example, what is required for a similarity CRR to obtain? Not only must there be a *being toward another*, but there must also be something that makes this CRR a similarity relation, e.g., *being as white as*, rather than some other specific kind of CRR. What contracts the most general genus of relation are individual real ‘things’ that fall under the absolute (non-relative) categories of substance, quantity, or quality.<sup>18</sup> A substance is a ‘thing,’ a quantity is a ‘thing,’ and a quality is a ‘thing,’ and such ‘things’ contract the most general genus of relation. But before we can understand what the contraction of the genus of relation by a ‘thing’ consists of, it is helpful to know what Henry means by such ‘things.’

Henry is well known for distinguishing the ways in which we might use the term ‘thing’ (*res*). In the broadest use of the word, a ‘thing’ (“*res a reor*”) is any individual or essence, whether possible or impossible, that can be thought of, as opposed to nothing whatsoever.<sup>19</sup> In a more restricted use of the word, a ‘thing’ (“*res a ratitu-*

*secundum duos modos inhaerendi, scilicet sub ratione efficientis subiectum, quod proprium est praedicamento qualitatis, vel in ratione mesurantis, quod proprium est praedicamento quantitatis. Et sic res cui convenit esse inhaerendo pertinet ad duo praedicamenta, quorum rationes diversae sunt et repugnantes ut circa eandem rem esse non possint: inesse enim mensurando nullo modo convenire potest rei qualitatis, neque rei quantitatis inesse efficiendo.”* M. HENNINGER also cites *Ql. V, 2*, fol. 155L.

17. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. V, 6*, fol. 162vT. Also cf. *Ql. VII, 1-2*, (ed. G.A. WILSON), p. 28, 78-82.

18. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 32, 5, ed. R. MACKEN, p. 79, 15-18, p. 93, 84-88: “aliud est *res praedicamenti*, aliud vero *ratio praedicamenti*. *Res praedicamenti* est quidquid per essentiam et naturam suam est contentum in ordine alicuius praedicamenti; *ratio praedicamenti* est proprius modus essendi eorum quae continentur in praedicamento. [...] De ‘ad aliquid’ igitur sciendum, quod cum iuxta praedicta secundum Boethium tria praedicamenta, substantia, scilicet, quantitas et qualitas, tam in creaturis quam in Deo, *rem designant et praedicant*, alia vero septem quoad id quo ab illis tribus distinguuntur, tam de Deo quam de creaturis, non *rem* sed quasi rei circumstantiam monstrant.”

19. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. VII, 1-2*, ed. G.A. WILSON, pp. 26, 46-27, 70. See also S. DUMONT’s discussion of Henry’s account of “*res a reor*” and divine ideas in: “The *quaestio si est* and the Metaphysical Proof for the Existence of God according to Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus,” in: *Franziskanische Studien* 66 (1984), pp. 340-342. On the background of Henry’s different uses of *res* see J.A. AERTSEN, “Transcendental Thought in Henry of Ghent,” in: W. VANHAMEL (ed.), *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the*

dine”) is any individual or essence, whether possible or actual, for which there is an idea in the divine mind. A ‘thing’ in this more restricted sense is an item that can be thought of and can exist extramentally. But even more, such a ‘thing’ is the intentional object of a divine idea; and, according to Henry, such a ‘thing’ is an absolute item that is the basis of God’s knowing a CRR.<sup>20</sup> Since, according to Henry, a CRR is a way or mode in which such a ‘thing’ can exist (namely toward another), he infers that a CRR is not a ‘thing’ (in this sense) but a “mode of a thing.”<sup>21</sup> Richard Cross has nicely summarized Henry’s position as follows:

Only substance, quantity and quality count as things in this second sense. Relations do not, on the grounds that the only ideas that God has of them are the same as the ideas that he has of non-relational items. For one of these non-relational things to be related to another is for the thing to be modalized in a certain way (to include a “mode of being”).<sup>22</sup>

*International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Death (1293)*, Leuven 1996, pp. 1-18; M. PICKAVÉ, *Heinrich von Gent über Metaphysik als erste Wissenschaft. Studien zu einem Metaphysikentwurf aus dem letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Leiden 2007, pp. 237-242; P. PORRO, “*Res a reor reris / res a ratitudine*. Autour d’Henri de Gand,” in: I. ATUCHA – D. CALMA – C. KÖNIG-PRALONG – I. ZAVATTERO (eds.), *Mots médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, Porto 2011, pp. 617-628, esp. 620-625; and M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, pp. 48-52.

20. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. VII*, 1-2, ed. G.A. WILSON, p. 18, 31-39: “Dicimus igitur, breviter recolligendo, quod isti octo modi entium proprias ideas in Deo non habent: intentiones secundae, relationes, artificialia, genera, differentiae, individua, privationes et numeri. Restat igitur quod proprias ideas solummodo habent specificae rerum essentiae, quarum idealis ratio est ratio omnium aliorum quae circa ipsas considerantur, quae quidem specificae rerum essentiae aequaliter accidentalem habent comparisonem ad omnia illa quae sic circa ipsas considerantur, quae e converso habent comparisonem essentialem ad ipsas.” On this text, see O. BOULNOIS, “Ce dont Dieu n’a pas idée. Problèmes de l’idéalisme médiéval (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles),” in: O. BOULNOIS – J. SCHMUTZ – J.-L. SOLÈRE (eds.), *Le Contemplateur et les idées. Modèles de la science divine, du néoplatonisme au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 2002, pp. 45-78, esp. 62.

21. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 55, 6, ed. J.C. FLORES, in: ID., *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity*, Leuven 2006, p. 211, 128-132: “Relatio enim et res est et est modus. Sed ex se non est nisi circumstantia sive quidam modus, nisi aliquis sic velit extendere rem ut rem appellet etiam modum rei, maxime qui sequitur rem ex natura rei et non ex natura intellectus, qui etiam res rationis appellatur cum habet esse a solo intellectu, licet non appellatur res simpliciter.” See also M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, pp. 55-56.

22. R. CROSS, “Accidents, Substantial Forms, and Causal Powers in the Late Thirteenth Century: Some Reflections on the Axiom ‘Actiones sunt suppositorum,’” in: Ch. ERISMANN – A. SCHNIEWIND (eds.), *Compléments de substance: Études sur les propriétés accidentelles offertes à Alain de Libera*, Paris 2008, p. 138, see references there.

Having seen what Henry means by a ‘thing’ we are better situated to know what he means by saying that such a ‘thing’ contracts the most general genus of relation. Henry calls these real ‘things’ the foundations of CRRs. In Henry’s clearest articulation he says that the foundation of a CRR is the specific difference of a specific CRR.<sup>23</sup> An absolute ‘thing’ contracts the most general genus of relation such that there is a specific CRR. As I show below, over the course of his career Henry gives more precision to how a ‘thing’ functions as the specific difference of a specific CRR. Nonetheless, his position is roughly the same throughout.

In Henry’s early discussion of CRRs in *Quodlibet* III, 4 (1278) he says that a ‘thing’ “determines” a CRR to be the specific CRR that it is.<sup>24</sup> For example, according to Henry a ‘thing’s’ active (and passive) powers are grounded in the ‘thing,’<sup>25</sup> and so a ‘thing’ as an active power “determines” a CRR to be an active CRR (e.g., generating), as opposed to some other species of a CRR.

When talking about divine personal relations Henry even goes so far as to say that a CRR “by comparison to the essence is not toward something but is something, and [is] the same ‘thing’ that is the essence. Nevertheless, it has a certain difference from [the essence].”<sup>26</sup> There are two noteworthy points from this passage. First, Henry sug-

23. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 63, 3, fol. 198rL-vL: “Et circa ipsam huiusmodi rationem ut differentiae apponuntur illi ipsa fundamenta relata distincta, quae sunt aliorum praedicamentorum, super quae relatio sive respectus ad aliud fundatur, siue potius apponuntur illi relata res contractae ab illis praedicamentis, ut sic per realitatem fundamenti, aut quam a suo fundamento contrahit relatio, contrahatur ipsa relatio ad speciem, et per diuersa fundamenta a quibus diuersas realitates contrahit etiam ad diuersas species contrahatur, et per illas realitates tanquam per differentias diuidatur, et ex singulis cum genere constituuntur singulae species [...]”

24. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 52vV: “Talem autem respectum non potest de se habere essentia quae est in singularibus nisi ex aliquo ordine quem ex natura sua determinat ad aliud; qualem determinant sibi inuicem calefactiuum et calefactibile ex natura potentiae actiuae calefactionis in uno et susceptiuae in alio.” Also cf. *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 52rR: “[...] aliam rationem ad aliquid importat Pater quia fundatam super rationem potentiae actiuae, aliam uero Filii quia fundatam super rationem potentiae quasi passiuae [...]”

25. For discussion of, and references to, Henry’s account of metaphysical powers (‘potentia’) grounded in a ‘thing,’ see S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2011, pp. 125-134.

26. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 52rR: “Per comparisonem uero ad essentiam habet non esse ad aliquid sed esse aliquid, et idem secundum rem quod ipsa essentia. Aliquam tamen differentiam habet ab ea.”

gests that a CRR is the same ‘thing’ as its foundation (“essence”); I argue later that the sameness here is numerical sameness without identity. Second, Henry suggests that the absolute foundation is the specific difference of a specific CRR. However, Henry does not exploit his suggestion that a ‘thing’ is the specific difference of a specific CRR until later in *Quodlibet* VII, 1-2 (1283), *Quodlibet* IX, 3 (1286), and *Summa*, 63, 3 (1291). In *Quodlibet* III, 4, Henry states his difficulty in figuring out how a CRR is “determined by” its absolute foundation to be the specific CRR that it is when he says:

But what the reality is in [relations] is not entirely perspicuous. For we cannot call a relation an absolute thing. For the quiddity of a relation is not that it is something, but only that it is toward something. Therefore a thing that is a relation cannot be called a thing that is something or a quiddity, but only a thing that is toward something or rather a thing that is the very being toward something. But how this being toward something can be called a thing, this is what is obscure.<sup>27</sup>

In *Quodlibet* V, 6, (1281), Henry discusses CRRs again and this time he summarizes what he takes Aristotle to say in *Metaphysics* V, 15, regarding the origins and principles of specific CRRs. To ask what the origin and principle of a specific CRR is, is to inquire after the identity conditions of that specific CRR. In *Quodlibet* III, 4, Henry mentions the origins and principles of CRRs but does not go into any depth about them compared to his later discussion in *Quodlibet*, V, 6.<sup>28</sup> In this later discussion—following Aristotle—Henry says that every ‘thing’ is a being (*ens*), and that being has the properties of one (*unum*) or many (*multum*), and then, potency (*potentia*) or act (*actus*).<sup>29</sup> For example, some ‘things’ are specifically one (e.g., two

27. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 52vT: “Quod autem sit in eis realitas, non omnino est perspicuum. Rem enim absolutam relationem dicere non possumus. Quiditas enim relationis non est quae sit aliquid, sed solum quod sit ad aliquid. Res ergo quae relatio est, non potest dici res quae est aliquid siue quid, sed solum res quae est ad aliquid, immo res quae est ipsum esse ad aliquid. Hoc autem quomodo ipsum esse ad aliquid potest dici res, hoc est quod hic obscurum est.”

28. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 51vP-52rR.

29. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* V, 6, fol. 162rP: “Quod oportet sic intelligere quoniam circa ens quod ponit rem et naturam aliquam in creaturis, cuiusmodi sunt substantia, quantitas, qualitas, duo genera generalium proprietatum considerantur: quae sunt unum, multum, actus, potentia; quae sunt origines et principia relationum circa entia absoluta, et fundandi relationes in illis. Vnde secundum illa duo genera Philosophus V *Metaphysicae*, distinguit solummodo duo genera relationum, ad quas omnes aliae habent

white things) and diverse in number, and some ‘things’ are specifically many (e.g., one white thing, one black thing) and diverse in number.<sup>30</sup> Henry claims that a ‘thing’ as such is not what makes a specific CRR what it is, but rather a ‘thing’ under one of these attributes of being is what makes a specific CRR what it is. This is an important clarification. For Henry is saying that a ‘thing’ as such is not a cause or principle of a specific CRR founded on it; instead, a ‘thing’ under one of these general properties of being is the cause or principle of a specific CRR founded on it. However, it is not until *Quodlibet* VII, 1-2, that Henry calls a ‘thing,’ which is the origin or principle of a specific CRR, the “specific difference” of a specific CRR.<sup>31</sup>

In *Quodlibet* IX, 3 (1286), Henry appropriates Simplicius’s *Commentary on Aristotle’s Categories* in support of his view that the foundation of a specific CRR is its specific difference.<sup>32</sup> Henry claims

reduci, scilicet quod quaedam sunt relatiua modo numeri siue secundum numerum, quaedam vero modo potentiae actiuae et passiuae siue per potentiam actiuam et passiuam, licet non eodem modo, sed diuersimode secundum diuersos modos relationum in utroque genere relationum.”

30. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* V, 6, fol. 162rP: “Vnum habet idem, simile, et aequale, et multum habet diuersum, dissimile, et inaequale. Ab uno enim et multo in substantia causantur idem et diuersum; ab uno et multo in quantitate aequale et inaequale; ab uno et multo in qualitate simile et dissimile.”

31. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* VII, 1-2, ed. G.A. WILSON, pp. 23, 59-62; 24, 81-85: “Primo, quoniam si circumscribatur per intellectum omnino res substantiae, quantitatis, et qualitatis, et concipitur intellectus relationis siue respectus ad aliud praecise, sub illa impossibile est assignare aliquas differentias specificas. [...] Quare, cum nihil est reale in praedicamento, nisi illud penes quod accipiuntur differentiae specificae in illo, et specierum distinctio, nihil igitur procul dubio reale est in praedicamento relationis, nisi id quod res alterius praedicamenti.”

32. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* IX, 3, ed. R. MACKEN, Leuven 1983, p. 56, 82-88: “Quam quidem realitatem contractam a fundamento respectu habitudinis indeterminatae, SIMPLICIUS appellat differentiam; quam si secundum se haberet, assimilaretur aliis praedicamentis, ut iam dictum est secundum SIMPLICIUM. Propter quod saepius alibi diximus quod relatio realitatem suam contrahit a suo fundamento, et quod ex se non est nisi habitudo nuda, quae non est nisi modus quidam rem habendi ad aliud, et ita non res quantum est ex se, sed solummodo modus rei [...]” For a discussion of Henry’s reading of Simplicius in *Ql.* IX, 3, see R. SCHÖNBERGER, *Relation als Vergleich. Die Relationstheorie des Johannes Buridan im Kontext seines Denkens und der Scholastik*, Leiden 1994, pp. 95-98; and J. DECORTE, “Relation and Substance in Henry of Ghent’s Metaphysics,” in: G. GULDENTOPS – C. STEEL (eds.), *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, Leuven 2003, pp. 8-11. On Simplicius’ own theory, see O. HARARI, “Simplicius on the Reality of Relations and Relational Change,” in: *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 37 (2009), pp. 244-274, esp. 248-261.

that the most general genus of relation is contracted by ‘things’ that fall under the absolute categories of substance, quantity, or quality, because the most general genus of relation is only a mode or way of being, namely being toward another.<sup>33</sup> The quidditative content of a specific CRR derives from an absolute ‘thing’ in the category of substance, quantity, or quality. A specific CRR is parasitic upon a ‘thing’ from an absolute category for its being the specific CRR that it is. Henry is reductionistic about talk of “common relations” such as similarity and equality. Talk of, e.g., similarity relations is reducible to absolute qualities (an absolute ‘thing’) that contract the genus of relation. A specific CRR (e.g., *being as white as*) has two essential ingredients: a ‘thing’ and being toward another.

Furthermore, if the absolute foundation of a CRR is its specific difference, then what explains a CRR’s being a similarity CRR rather than a dissimilarity CRR, or an active CRR (e.g., *generating*) rather than a passive CRR (e.g., *being generated*)? Following Simplicius, Henry distinguishes between CRRs founded on numerically the same ‘thing,’ and the way in which a CRR is founded on an absolute ‘thing.’ For example, a similarity CRR and a dissimilarity CRR can be founded on numerically the same ‘thing’; a pale object is similar to another pale object and dissimilar to a black object. Henry summarizes his exegesis of Simplicius’s *Commentary on Aristotle’s Categories* as follows:

[A real relation] can be considered in two ways in an order to its foundation: in one way precisely as it is founded in [a ‘thing’] [and] in another way as founded in [a ‘thing’] [a real relation] receives a characterization from it.<sup>34</sup>

33. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 63, 3, fol.198vM: “Et per hoc relatio ut est ratio et modus praedicamenti, licet in genere nullam realitatem propriam generis inquantum est genus importet, sed praecisum modum essendi ad aliud, tamen cum huiusmodi modo et ratione realitatem importat in speciebus suis, et in omnibus contentis in praedicamento relationis propriam illis inquantum species sunt et contenta sub genere relationis. Et est solus ille modus propria quidditas relationi secundum genus, et secundum quod relatio est, et per consequens toti praedicamento illius inquantum distinguitur a praedicamenti absolutis [...]”

34. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. IX*, 3, ed. R. MACKEN, p. 59, 61-68 (translation in italics): “Sic igitur patet quod, circumscripta re fundamenti, relatio, sive in Deo sive in creaturis, non est nisi modus quidam essendi ad aliud, sicut esse in alio non est similiter aliquid nisi modus quidam essendi. Qui, cum in relationibus realibus non est fundatus nisi in re, et hoc absque omni consideratione intellectus, ut saepius diximus, respectu talis *in ordine ad*

For Henry, we must acknowledge that a specific CRR's being founded on an absolute 'thing' is not sufficient for the CRR to be the specific CRR that it is. Each 'thing' must communicate a certain character to the CRR founded on it.<sup>35</sup> The absolute accident, *being pale*, not only can be the foundation of a similarity CRR but also of a dissimilarity CRR. Consequently, we must consider what is required for an absolute 'thing' to communicate a specific difference to—i.e., “characterize”—a specific CRR. What Henry gets from Simplicius is a way to describe numerically the same 'thing's being the specific difference for specifically diverse CRRs. Numerically the same 'thing' can give diverse characterizations (specific differences) for CRRs. However, to understand better the metaphysics of a 'thing's being the origin and principle of diverse specific differences for CRRs we must return to what Henry says in *Quodlibet* V, 6, and this is precisely what Henry does in *Summa*, 63, 3 (1291).

In *Summa*, 63, 3 Henry asks the question whether common relations (e.g., co-specificity, equality, similarity) are distinguished by genus and species.<sup>36</sup> In effect, Henry is asking what is required for a 'thing' to characterize a specific CRR. Whereas in *Quodlibet* IX, 3, Henry distinguishes between a foundation and its communicating a specific difference to (“characterizing”) a specific CRR, it is in *Summa*, 63, 3, that Henry explains (again) what is required for a 'thing's characterizing a specific CRR founded on it:

*suum fundamentum potest considerari dupliciter: uno modo praecise ut fundatur in illa; alio modo ut fundatus in illa recipit ab ipsa characterzationem.*”

35. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* IX, 3, ed. R. MACKEN, p. 55, 52-55: “Sed illud sic debemus intelligere quod habitudinem, quae nuda est secundum se et non nisi modus quidam, ipsum fundamentum, in quantum fundatur in ipso, characterizat, communicans ei per hoc quodam modo realitatem suam [...]” Also *Summa*, 63, 3, ad 1, fol. 199vV: “Quia licet distinctio communis generalissimi in talibus sit per additamentum, ut dictum est, et quoad hoc non in tantum essentialiter fit distinctio secundum genera et species in relationibus istis sicut in absolutis, quia tamen ipsum fundamentum per quod fit additamentum illi communi quodammodo subintrat rationem respectus in dando ei realitatem [...]”

36. Henry refers to this text as his proper response to this question in HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 64, 3, fol. 202vT: “Dico quod relationes communes sicut et aliae necessario distinguuntur secundum distinctionem fundamentorum et modos fundandi in illis, ut habitum est et expositum in tertia quaestione articuli praecedentis.”



Relations are not founded on absolute categories insofar as they are things simply and absolutely—namely substance, quantity, or quality, but insofar as [substance, quantity, and quality] in themselves have real general modes by which relations are distinguished in each category. [These real general modes] are potency, act, one, [and] many, which primarily divide being and any category of being insofar as it is a being.<sup>37</sup>

A ‘thing’ communicates a specific difference to a CRR because of a real mode of that ‘thing.’ Henry says that an existing ‘thing’ is a being; and being is primarily divided up by potency (“potentia”) or act (“actus”), and, one (“unum”) or many (“multum”). What Henry means by saying that potency, act, one, and many, “primarily divide up being” is that they are disjunctive modes of being. Any being is either a potency for something or actually something, and, any being is either one (undivided) or many (divided). Henry claims that a ‘thing’—under one such attribute of being—communicates a specific difference to a specific CRR. CRRs are founded on a ‘thing’ in different ways because of the different modes or attributes of being grounded in an existing ‘thing.’ According to Henry, a CRR is not merely founded on an absolute ‘thing,’ but it is founded on a ‘thing’ according to the ‘thing’s mode of being, namely a ‘thing’s being in potency or act, one or many. Unlike his more abbreviated discussion in *Quodlibet* V, 6, Henry goes on to say that potency is divided into active potency and passive potency. For example, a human person’s active potency for generating another human person is grounded in the person’s substance, a ‘thing.’ The specific difference of the relation *generating* is the person’s active potency for generating another of the same substance-kind. In other words, if an existing specific CRR is characterized by or founded on an active potency, then that specific CRR is an active CRR (e.g., *generating*). If an existing specific CRR is characterized or founded on a passive potency, then that specific CRR is a passive CRR (e.g., *being generated*).<sup>38</sup>

37. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 63, 3, fol. 198vO: “Non enim fundantur relationes super praedicamenta absoluta secundum quod res sunt simpliciter et absolute, puta substantia, quantitas, aut qualitas, sed secundum quod in se habent modos reales generales quibus distinguuntur singula praedicamenta, quae sunt potentia, actus, unum, multum quibus primo diuiditur ens, et quodlibet praedicamentum entis in quantum ens est.”

38. Henry uses the distinction between the foundation and mode of a foundation to a large extent in his theological discussion of internal divine production. Cf. *Summa*, 58, 3, fol. 148vG. See also S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and*

Recall that in *Quodlibet* V, 6, Henry said that being is divided up by one or many, and then, by potency or act. In *Summa*, 63, 3, Henry qualifies what he said in *Quodlibet* V, 6, by saying that the order of the disjunctive attributes of being (one or many, potency or act) presented in *Quodlibet* V, 6, was according to Aristotle's way of teaching about them, but not according to the natural order between them.<sup>39</sup> In *Summa*, 63, 3, Henry argues that the natural order is the reverse: being is divided up by potency or act, and then, by one or many. Nonetheless, Henry's arguments for this position (which I do not consider here) don't alter his general theory of CRRs. We can say that Henry's positions in *Summa*, 63, 3 and in *Quodlibet* V, 6 are in effect the same.

What else, then, is required for a specific CRR to obtain? According to Henry, the end term or object of a specific CRR must exist.<sup>40</sup> If Socrates is white and is as white as something or someone else, then that other white thing must exist. If there were only one white thing in the world, then Socrates would not be as white as anything else. Hence, the existence of a CRR's end term or object is a necessary condition for the existence of a specific CRR.

Lastly, Henry distinguishes between the absolute foundation of a specific CRR and the subject of a specific CRR.<sup>41</sup> The foundation of a specific CRR is an existing absolute 'thing'—under some attribute of being—that is the specific difference of a specific CRR. The subject of a specific CRR is what, or who, is related to the object in question. For example, suppose Socrates and Plato are each white.

*Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 87-94 (on passive potency), and pp. 134 – 144 (on active potency). See also P. PORRO, "Henry of Ghent," in: E.N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/henry-ghent/#SubPosObjPos>>.

39. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 63, 1, fol. 195rS: "Quod dixerim ne aliqui aestiment me contraria dixisse in eo quod in quaestionibus de Quolibet sequendo ordinem doctrinae secundum processum Philosophi, dixi quod primus modus relationis est ille qui est modo numeri, scilicet relationum communium, nunc autem dico sequendo naturam rei quod ille ultimus est seu tertius."

40. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* V, 6, fol. 162vT.

41. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 66, 3, ad 2, fol. 213rO: "Dico quod respectus quia nihil rei addit super suum fundamentum ideo ut comparatur ad fundamentum aut ad subiectum in quo est ipsum fundamentum, incidit in fundamentum et nihil ponit praeter fundamentum propter quod super respectum ut consideratur in ordine ad suum fundamentum aut ad subiectum illius, nullus alius respectus fundari potest [...]." Also cf. *Summa*, 59, 2, fol. 138vS; 67, 2, fol. 215vM-216rM; and 67, 4, ad 1, fol. 222vX.

Hence, Socrates is similar in color to Plato and Plato is similar in color to Socrates. Socrates' absolute accident, *being white*, is the foundation of his similarity relation to Plato, but his *being white* is not the subject related to Plato. Rather, Socrates—a primary substance, a supposite—is the subject of the similarity relation that terminates at Plato. The foundation of a specific CRR is not the subject of a specific CRR and the subject is not the foundation of a specific CRR.

Given this survey of Henry's general theory of CRRs, we can say that for Henry

a specific CRR exists if and only if

- (1) a subject, *s1*, is or has an absolute thing (*res*), *t1*, that falls under an absolute category, *C*, and,
- (2) a subject, *s2*, is or has an absolute thing (*res*), *t2*, that falls under an absolute category, *C*, and,
- (3) *s1* has a generic mode of being toward (*ad aliud esse*) *s2* that is contracted by *t1* and *t1*'s attribute of being (potency or act, one or many), and,
- (4) *s2* has a generic mode of being toward *s1* that is contracted by *t2* and *t2*'s attribute of being (potency or act, one or many).

#### 4. *Specific CRRs and Numerical Sameness without Identity*

I now examine Mark Henninger's interpretation of the connection between a CRR and its absolute foundation. According to Henninger, Henry teaches that a specific CRR is identical, as a 'thing,' to its absolute foundation. Henninger says that

[H1] Henry claims that a real relation and its foundation are really identical, i.e. identical as things or *res*.<sup>42</sup>

Henninger goes on to qualify [H1] by saying that\_

[H2] This foundation can exist in two ways or modes, absolutely and relatively.<sup>43</sup>

In [H2] Henninger refers to Henry's general claim that such 'things' have their own existence (*esse*). A substance exists in itself (*esse in se*), a quantity exists in a substance (*esse in alio*), and a quality exists in a

42. M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 52.

43. M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 52.

substance (*esse in alio*). Henry claims that a ‘thing’<sup>s</sup> existing in itself or a ‘thing’<sup>s</sup> existing in another are incompatible ways of existing for the very same ‘thing.’ A ‘thing’ either exists in itself, or in another, but it would be incompatible to be both. However, it is compatible for numerically the same ‘thing,’ whether it exists in itself or in another, also to exist toward another (*ad aliud esse*).<sup>44</sup> For instance, a white thing exists in a substance, and a white thing is the specific difference that contracts a generic CRR so that a subject that is white is *as white as* another white subject.

However, Henninger does not discuss further what Henry might mean by suggesting that a specific CRR is “identical as a thing” to its foundation. Given [H2], Henry cannot be taken to assert that a specific CRR is identical to its foundation. For if a specific CRR and its foundation were identical, then whatever is true of one is true of the other. If  $x$  and  $y$  have exactly the same modal features, then  $x$  and  $y$  are identical. However, a ‘thing’ and a specific CRR do not have exactly the same modal features. For example, a ‘thing’ can exist absolutely and relatively, but a specific CRR can exist only relatively (*esse ad aliud*). Thus, we have reason to believe that a foundation and a specific CRR founded on it are not identical because they do not have exactly the same modal features.

Nevertheless, Henninger does not seem to be ascribing to Henry the view that an absolute foundation and a specific CRR are identical. Instead, Henninger says they are [H1] “identical as a thing.” Elsewhere he says that for Henry

[H3] [A specific CRR is] the same ‘thing’ as its foundation.<sup>45</sup>

Henninger is careful to distinguish between a specific CRR’s ‘thing’ and the whole CRR. It is the former that is identical to its foundation, and not the latter. (As we will see in section 5, Decorte disagrees. Decorte claims that a specific CRR is identical to its foundation.) Henry consistently says that a specific CRR and its foundation

44. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* VII, 1-2, ed. G.A. WILSON, p. 29, 6-9: “Cui enim rei convenit esse in se secundum rationem praedicamenti substantiae vel in alio secundum rationem praedicamenti accidentis absoluti, bene potest convenire esse ad aliud secundum praedicamentum relationis.” Also *Ql.* V, 6, fol. 161vO.

45. M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 67.

are the same ‘thing’ (*res*).<sup>46</sup> The most perspicuous answer to the question of what the connection between a specific CRR and its foundation is, is that the ‘thing’ of an absolute category and the ‘thing’ of a specific CRR are numerically the same ‘thing.’ Recall from *Quodlibet* III, 4, Henry’s claim that a CRR is “the same ‘thing’” as its foundation. Henry never calls a CRR a ‘thing’ *simpliciter*; he consistently calls a CRR a way in which a ‘thing’ exists, namely being toward another. Henry refuses to call a specific CRR a ‘thing’ *simpliciter* because of his metaphysical doctrine that specific differences of CRRs are ‘things’ from the absolute categories that are under a certain attribute of being, i.e., potency or act, one or many. A CRR is a ‘thing’ by virtue of its specific difference. No additional ‘thing’ is required for a specific CRR to exist; only a ‘thing’s’ being “modalized,” as Cross puts it, is required. In sum, my interpretation of Henry’s general theory of CRRs is that a specific CRR and its foundation (under some attribute of being) are numerically the same ‘thing’ without being identical.

A specific CRR is constituted by a ‘thing’ under a certain attribute of being (i.e., potency or act, one or many), and being toward another. A specific CRR’s ‘thing’ is numerically the same ‘thing’ as the foundation of this specific CRR. Now, if a specific CRR’s ‘thing’ and its foundation are numerically the same ‘thing,’ does it follow that a specific CRR and its foundation are identical? I contend that a specific CRR (i.e., the composite of a ‘thing’ and ‘being toward another’) is not identical to its foundation. One argument for non-identity would be based on the intuition that a composite is not identical to one of its constituents. A specific CRR is a composite, and a ‘thing’ is a constituent of the specific CRR. That is, the ‘thing’ is the specific difference of a specific CRR.

Moreover, a specific CRR and its foundation fail a test for identity: they do not have exactly the same modal properties. A ‘thing’ *can exist* in two ways or modes (i.e., absolutely and relatively), but a specific CRR *can exist* in only one way or mode (i.e., relatively) (see [H2]). Hence, even though a specific CRR and its foundation are numerically

46. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 52rR (in note 24 above); *Summa*, 32, 5, ed. R. MACKEN, p. 93, 84-88; *Ql.* V, 6, fol. 162vV; *Ql.* VII, 1-2, ad 2, ed. G.A. WILSON, pp. 22, 28 – 25, 10. Also cf. *Summa*, 55, 6, ed. J.C. FLORES, p. 211, 128-132.

the same ‘thing,’ the specific CRR and its foundation are not identical. What makes the most sense, then, is that Henry is committed to the view that the connection between a specific CRR and its foundation is that they are numerically the same ‘thing,’ but a specific CRR and its foundation are not identical.

In Rea and Brower’s discussion of numerical sameness without identity they distinguish between accidental (contingent) numerical sameness without identity and essential numerical sameness without identity. Likewise, it seems to me that Henry distinguishes between contingent and essential numerical sameness without identity. In fact, Henry has a systematic account of contingent numerical sameness without identity. Henry explains this contingency by appealing to what he calls an intentional distinction between a foundation and a specific CRR. Henry distinguishes between two levels of intentional distinction and says that it is the “major” intentional distinction that is required for contingent numerical sameness without identity. Henninger nicely formulates Henry’s criterion for the major intentional distinction between a specific CRR and its foundation as follows:

If *a* and *b* are really the same, and neither the concept of *a* includes that of *b*, nor *vice versa*, then *a* and *b* [satisfy the major] intentional distinct[ion].<sup>47</sup>

Henninger goes on to explain why Henry supposes that a specific CRR and its foundation satisfy the major intentional distinction. I quote Henninger in full because of his clarity and conciseness.

First, a real relation and its foundation are really the same because they are the same thing or *res* in Henry’s sense of [...] nature or essence. Further, it can be conceded that the concept of a quality like whiteness does not include the concept of similarity. But might the concept of similarity include that of

47. M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 54 and references there, and especially p. 47, note 21. For Henry’s description of the “major” and “minor” intentional distinctions cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. V*, 6, fol. 161rL-vL: “Sed in eis quae intentione differunt sunt gradus secundum differentiam maiorem et minorem. De eis enim quae sunt idem re in eodem, aliquando sic formantur conceptus diversi, ut neutrum eorum in suo conceptu alterum includat, ut sunt conceptus diversarum differentiarum quae concurrunt in eodem, sicut sunt in homine rationale, sensibile, vegetabile, in quantum differentiae sunt. Et similiter conceptus generis et differentiae quae constituunt simplicem speciem, sicut sunt animal et rationale. Et in istis duobus modis est maxime differentia intentionum. Sunt et alii quatuor modi in quibus minor est differentia, quia conceptus unius intentionis includit alterum, sed non e converso, ut conceptus speciei conceptum generis et differentiae, non autem e converso.”

the quality that serves as its foundation? Henry responds that the concept of similarity does include that of quality, but only of quality as inhering in numerically diverse subjects and so serving as the foundation for the relations of similarity. But [...] Henry claims, while the concept of similarity does include that of quality *qua* inhering in diverse subjects, it does not include that of quality *simpliciter*. For Henry, then, the final condition is fulfilled for a real relation being intentionally distinct from its foundation.<sup>48</sup>

In brief, Henry explains a specific CRR and its foundation's being contingently numerically the same 'thing' without identity by appealing to the major intentional distinction between them. If a specific CRR and its foundation satisfy the major intentional distinction, then they are contingently numerically the same 'thing' without identity.

What then of essential numerical sameness without identity? In the case of essential numerical sameness without identity, Henry in effect distinguishes between divine (uncreated) and created essential numerical sameness without identity. The basis of the difference is that God is a necessary and infinite being and creatures are contingent beings. In the case of created essential numerical sameness without identity, Henry can be taken to suggest that the two items in question satisfy the minor intentional distinction. The criterion for Henry's minor intentional distinction can be formulated in the following way.

If *c* and *d* are really the same 'thing,' and the concept of *c* includes that of *d*, but the concept of *d* does not include *c*, then *c* and *d* satisfy the minor intentional distinction.<sup>49</sup>

For example, Henry says that a creature's substance (essence) and existence satisfy the minor intention distinction.<sup>50</sup> Whereas the concept of a substance's existence includes the substance, the concept of a substance *as such* does not include that of its existence. For I can think of Socrates without thinking that Socrates exists. Likewise, the

48. M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, p. 55.

49. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. V*, 6, fol. 161vL: "Quia conceptus unius intentionis includit alterum, sed non econuerso." For discussion cf. R. TESKE, "Distinctions in the Metaphysics of Henry of Ghent," in: *Traditio* 61 (2006) pp. 235-239. Also cf. P. PORRO, "Henry of Ghent."

50. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. X*, 7, ed. R. MACKEN, Leuven 1981, pp. 164-166. See also R. TESKE, "Distinctions in the Metaphysics of Henry of Ghent," in: *Traditio* 61 (2006), pp. 238-239.

concept of a species includes that of its genus and specific difference, but the latter (genus, specific difference) do not include the former.

In the case of creatures, essential sameness without identity obtains when two items satisfy the minor intentional distinction. But in the case of God, Henry contends that there are no intentionally distinct items because God is a necessary and infinite being. Consequently, for divine essential numerical sameness to obtain there is a different criterion than the criterion in the creaturely case.

In brief, Henry stipulates that if divine essential numerical sameness without identity obtains then there must be mutual entailment between the two items in question. Henry claims that the divine essence entails the divine persons because of its necessity, infinity, and its active and passive metaphysical potencies; likewise, each divine person entails the divine essence.<sup>51</sup> For example, the divine essence is necessarily the Father's active power for generating the Son, and the divine essence is necessarily the Son's passive power for its being communicated to the Son.<sup>52</sup> (Henry's claim that the divine essence grounds a passive power can be easily misunderstood. In effect, Henry just

51. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 55, 6, ed. J.C. FLORES, pp. 213, 218 – 214, 227: "Licet enim sit unica [essentia] re absoluta, propter tamen eiusdem infinitatem et illimitationem ipsa est per se ratio ut quasi fluant ab ipsa diversi respectus modo actionis et passionis sibi respondententes, et ulterius diversa producta, ut modo actionis generare et spirare ad producendum active Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, et modo passionis generari et spirari ad producendum quasi passive Filium et Spiritum Sanctum; ut ipsa essentia simplex et unica sit per se perfecta ratio eius quod respectus diversi sunt, non solum quod sunt respectus simpliciter, generare, spirare, generari, spirari, et per hoc quod sunt diversi sive distincti ipsi producti, non econverso. Diversitas productorum est ratio diversitatis eius quod est generare et generari, spirare et spirari." Also HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 29, 8, fol. 177vL; 35, 8, ed. G.A. WILSON, p. 80, 12-15; 75, 4, fol. 304vT. For discussion see S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 41ff., esp. note 35.

52. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. XIV*, 2, fol. 560rD, 560vG: "In diuinis enim non est nisi unicum secundum rem quod est fundamentum utriusque relationis, et cum una relatione constituit actuum siue agens et producens, ut Patrem, qui diuina essentia ut est forma et potentia actiua super quam fundatur paternitas, generat. [...] Vnde in diuinis ubi actiuum et passiuum fundantur super eandem rem, licet non habeant distincta fundamenta realiter, habent tamen distincta extrema personaliter." Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 21, 5, fol. 129rD; 59, 1, fol. 136vH; 59, 2, fol. 139rZ-139vZ; 59, 2, ad 1, fol. 140rA; 59, 3, fol. 145rG; 59, 3, ad 2, fol. 146rK. See note 38 above. For references and discussion of divine necessity cf. S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 76-87.



means that the divine essence can be communicated (i.e., is communicable) to the Son (and to the Holy Spirit)). Since the divine persons are necessary beings because of the divine essence, Henry contends that no change or actualization is required for the internal production of a divine person. So, if we have the right concept of the divine essence's active (or passive) metaphysical potencies, then such a concept entails the persons, and *vice versa*. Consequently, we might formulate divine essential numerical sameness without identity as follows. Let '*e*' stand for a metaphysical potency (active or passive) grounded in the divine essence (a necessary and infinite 'thing'), and '*p*' for a divine person constituted by the divine essence and a specific CRR: If *e* and *p* are really the same 'thing,' and the concept of *e* includes that of *p* and the concept of *p* includes *e*, then *e* and *p* are essentially numerically the same divine 'thing' without being identical.

In summary, like Rea and Brower, Henry is committed to distinguishing between accidental (contingent) numerical sameness without identity and essential numerical sameness without identity. Henry claims that the former requires the major intentional distinction. For the latter Henry distinguishes between the case of creatures and of God. In the case of creatures essential numerical sameness without identity requires the minor intentional distinction, but in the case of God the minor intentional distinction is not required because the divine essence, and in turn each divine person, is a necessary and infinite being.

### 5. *Competing Interpretations*

According to Henninger, for Henry

[H1] A real relation and its foundation are really identical, i.e., identical as things or *res*.

I take it that Henninger's description of the sameness in [H1] between a CRR and its absolute foundation is consistent with my interpretation that they are numerically the same thing (*res*) without being identical. A foundation's 'thing' and a specific CRR's 'thing' are identical, that is, numerically identical.

But if [H1] were (wrongly) interpreted as saying that an absolute foundation and a specific CRR are identical, then this would be

misleading. In [H2] Henninger could be taken to imply that an absolute foundation's 'thing' does not have exactly the same modal properties as a specific CRR founded on it. An absolute foundation's 'thing' can exist absolutely and relatively, but a specific CRR can exist only relatively. Even more, given [H3], we have reason to believe that an absolute foundation and a CRR are not identical but rather "the same 'thing.'" I suggest that Henninger does not ascribe to Henry the view that an absolute foundation's 'thing' is identical to a specific CRR,<sup>53</sup> and that it is consistent with Henninger's interpretation to ascribe to Henry the view (as I do) that a foundation's 'thing' and a specific CRR's 'thing' are numerically the same 'thing' without the foundation and the specific CRR being identical.

Things are different with Decorte's interpretation of Henry's account of CRRs. Decorte focuses on the sameness between an absolute foundation's 'thing' and the whole CRR. Note that Decorte asks about the sameness between the 'thing' of an absolute foundation and the whole CRR, and not (like Henninger and I) on the sameness between a foundation's 'thing' and a CRR's 'thing.' The reason why Decorte shifts focus is because of his interpretation of Henry's Trinitarian theology.

As I mentioned above, Decorte believes that Henninger's not paying attention to the Trinitarian context in which Henry develops or tests his general theory of CRRs adversely affects the adequacy of Henninger's interpretation. According to Decorte, the Trinitarian test to which Henry responds with his theory of CRRs is as follows. Decorte says:

In that [Trinitarian] context [Henry] ha[s] to solve an awkward problem: [he] ha[s] to explain how in God the persons are identical with the divine essence, yet different among themselves. In short [Henry] has to explain how, X standing for the (unknown) essence of divinity, X is identical to A, with

53. There is other evidence too. Henninger reports Henry's claim that an absolute foundation's *res* and a specific CRR are intentionally distinct. Cf. M. HENNINGER, *Relations*, pp. 54-55. Intentional distinction, for Henry, requires and entails non-identity. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Ql. V*, 6, fol. 163rZ (emphasis mine): "esse conuenit essentiae ratione qua est effectus Dei, quae ratio est extra intentionem essentiae ut est essentia. Propter quod secundum praedicta necessario *differunt intentione* in qualibet creatura essentia et respectus in ipsa fundatus sub nomine esse. *Propter quod per identitatem non potest istud esse praedicari in abstractione de essentia, dicendo quod essentia est ipsum esse aut entitas; sicut in Deo dicitur quod deitas est paternitas.*"

B and with C, while at the same time A is different from B and C, and B is different from C.  $X = A$ ,  $X = B$ ,  $X = C$ , and simultaneously  $A \neq B \neq C$ .<sup>54</sup>

In other words, the Trinitarian quandry is this: (1) the Father is God, (2) the Son is God, (3) the Holy Spirit is God, (4) there is numerically one God, and yet (e.g.,) (5) the Father is not the Son. Decorte claims that divine persons “are identical with the divine essence.” The divine essence is the *res* of a real relation, and each person is a real relation. For Decorte, then, we should interpret the statement “the Father is God” as an identity statement (“the Father is identical to the divine essence”). But how does interpreting “the Father is God” as an identity statement prevent the inference from (1), (2), and (4) to the conclusion that (5\*) “the Father is identical to the Son.” It does not.

In several of his articles on real relations according to Henry, Decorte describes the connection between an absolute thing (*res*) and a specific CRR in a more ambiguous way than saying they are identical. Decorte says:

The presence or absence of relational being in an essence or nature [*res*] will depend on a relatedness toward something else engraved in the very heart of that nature itself.<sup>55</sup>

It is not clear from Decorte’s description what type of sameness there is between a specific CRR and its foundation (*res*). On a charitable

54. J. DECORTE, “*Relatio as Modus Essendi*: The Origins of Henry of Ghent’s Definition of Relation,” in: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 10 (2002), p. 311 [henceforth “*Relatio as Modus Essendi*”]. Also ID., “‘Modus’ or ‘Res’: Scotus’s Criticism of Henry of Ghent’s Conception of the Reality of a Real Relation,” in: L. SILEO (ed.), *Via Scoti. Metodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti*, Rome 1995, p. 426: “Henry [...] maintain[s] [...] there is identity of *respectus* and fundament.” In a similar vein, M. Pickavé holds that according to Henry “auch in Gott eine Relation keinen eigenen ‘Sachgehalt’ zum Fundament, in dem sie gründet, hinzufügt” (*Heinrich von Gent über Metaphysik als erste Wissenschaft*, p. 241). If M. Pickavé means that a relation is identical to its foundation, then I disagree. But if he means that a relation’s character or specific difference is grounded in its foundation, then this is consistent with my interpretation.

55. J. DECORTE, “*Relatio as Modus Essendi*,” pp. 318-319. I have noticed that in Decorte’s articles on Henry on real relations there are several pages with approximately verbatim identity. I take this as a sign that Decorte did not develop or change his interpretation. Cf. ID., “Avicenna’s Ontology of Relation: A Source of Inspiration to Henry of Ghent,” in: J. JANSSENS – D. DESMET (eds.), *Avicenna and His Heritage: Acts of the International Colloquium, Leuven Sept. 8-11, 1999*, Leuven 2002, pp. 215-217; and ID., “Giles of Rome and Henry of Ghent on the Reality of a Real Relation,” in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 7 (1996), pp. 205-209.

reading it would seem that Decorte glosses Henry's claim that it is essential to a 'thing' to function as the specific difference of a specific CRR if a specific CRR exists. For example, a quality is essential to a similarity relation because a quality is the specific difference that contracts a generic CRR into a similarity CRR. It is not obvious from Decorte's description, however, how we should understand the sameness between a specific CRR and its foundation. Decorte offers two descriptions of the sameness between a specific CRR and its foundation. First, Decorte says that the sameness is identity. Second, Decorte seems to qualify the first description by saying that a CRR is "engraved in the very heart of that nature itself." But it is not clear what this qualification amounts to, though it might go proxy for Henry's claim that an absolute thing is the specific difference that contracts the genus of relation. What is distinctive of Decorte's interpretation is that a specific CRR is identical to its foundation (*res*).

Note that Henninger does not say that a specific CRR and its absolute foundation are identical. Instead, he says that they are [H2] "identical as things or *res*." It seems to me that Henninger's interpretation is preferable, and is consistent with my claim that for Henry a specific CRR and its foundation are numerically the same thing (*res*) without being identical. Decorte's interpretation of the sameness between a specific CRR and its foundation as identity contradicts my interpretation and (presumably) Henninger's too.

Above I mentioned that Decorte criticizes Henninger's interpretation because Decorte does not think that Henninger sufficiently pays attention to the Trinitarian question in which Henry develops or tests his general theory of CRRs. What, then, does Decorte propose Henninger's interpretation omits? When Decorte presents the "Trinitarian problem," he says that "the persons are identical with the divine essence, yet [are] different among themselves." For Henry, a divine person is a real relation; that is, a divine person is constituted by the absolute divine essence and a mode of being toward another person. It would seem that Decorte's interpretation of Henry's general theory of CRRs is guided by Decorte's interpretation of Henry's Trinitarian theology, namely that for Henry the divine CRRs (i.e. the persons) are identical to their foundation, i.e. the divine essence (*res*). Subsequently, for Decorte, a specific CRR and its foundation are identical. However, for Henninger, a specific CRR's 'thing' and its foundation

are identical, that is, numerically the same *res*. What Henninger (supposedly) misses from the Trinitarian context is Decorte's stronger claim that a specific CRR and its foundation (*res*) are identical.

However, I have shown already that it makes little sense to ascribe to Henry the view that a specific CRR and its foundation are identical. In [H1] Henninger says that the *res* of a CRR and the *res* of its absolute foundation are identical. He does not say that a specific CRR and its foundation are identical as Decorte contends. It should be clear by now that Henninger and Decorte do not have the same interpretation of Henry's account of CRRs, and that what explains Decorte's proposal that a specific CRR and its foundation are identical is Decorte's suggestion that (for Henry) "the [divine] persons are identical with the divine essence [*res*], yet different among themselves." But *contra* Decorte, it makes most sense to ascribe to Henry the view that a specific CRR is numerically the same *res* as its foundation without being identical to its foundation. The reason why a specific CRR and its foundation are not identical is that they do not pass a test for identity: if  $x$  and  $y$  have exactly the same modal properties and persistence conditions, then  $x$  and  $y$  are identical. For Henry, a specific CRR and its foundation do not have exactly the same modal properties, and so are not identical.<sup>56</sup>

## 6. Trinitarian Implications

In section 2 I introduced the notion of numerical sameness without identity *via* Rea and Brower, and in section 4 argued that Henry is committed to this notion in his general theory of CRRs. A specific CRR is numerically the same 'thing' (*res*) as its foundation, and a specific CRR and its foundation are not identical. A virtue of my interpretation is that several features of Henry's Trinitarian theology become understandable.

One implication of my interpretation of Henry's general theory of CRRs is that Henry has a plausible way to respond to the transitivity of identity objection against (1)-(5). Consider the following *prima*

56. See my discussion of Henry's account of divine persons' diverse modal properties in S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 87-94, and references there.

facie inconsistent conjunction of claims. (1) “The Father is God,” (2) “the Son is God”, (3) “there is numerically one God”, and (4) “the Father is not the Son.” If we interpret the ‘is’ in (1)-(2) as the ‘is’ of identity, as Decorte does, then it follows that (4\*) “the Father is identical to the Son.” But Christians reject (4\*) because, for example, only the Son became incarnate in Mary’s womb, etc. But Henry’s position is not consistent with taking the ‘is’ in (1)-(2) as that of identity, but rather with taking the “is” as the ‘is’ of essential numerical sameness without identity. On this interpretation, (1) should be understood as (1’) “the Father is essentially numerically the same thing (*res*) as, without being identical to, the divine essence,” and likewise for (2’) “the Son is essentially numerically the same thing (*res*) as, without being identical to, the divine essence.” If we put (1’), (2’), (3), and (4) together, then (4\*) does not follow. Instead, what follows is (4’) “the Father is essentially numerically the same thing as, without being identical to, the Son, and *vice versa*.” On this view the divine persons are not identical to the divine essence nor to each other, and so the transitivity of identity worry is plausibly overcome. Moreover, the desideratum of monotheism is satisfied because there is numerically one divine essence or ‘thing’ in the divine persons.

There is adequate evidence from Henry’s texts that support my interpretation of (1)-(2). Perhaps the most direct way to show this is by seeing whether Henry thinks the Father and Son are identical. One test for whether *x* and *y* are identical is if they have exactly the same modal properties and persistence conditions. In the case of divine persons, they are necessarily eternal (according to Henry), so persistence conditions will not test for identity. Nonetheless, Henry claims that the Son has a modal property that the Father does not have. The Son, and not the Father, can be produced from the divine intellect; that is, the Son can be the *per se* end term of an intellectual production.<sup>57</sup> Since the Son has a modal property that the Father

57. For discussion of Henry’s account of the intellectual generation of the Son, see S.M. WILLIAMS, “Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and John Duns Scotus: On the Theology of the Father’s Intellectual Generation of the Word,” in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 77 (2010), pp. 47-65; and ID., *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 151-213.

does not have, it follows that the Father and Son are not identical.<sup>58</sup> Most tellingly, Henry denies that the Father and Son are identical and claims that it is impossible that they are identical—to say they are identical is the heresy of Sabellianism.<sup>59</sup>

The second Trinitarian issue that I raise is this. What or who is the subject of a divine personal relation? Recall from section 3 that Henry distinguishes between the subject of a CRR and the foundation of a CRR. The subject is what, or who, is related to the object. The foundation (under a certain attribute of being) contracts the genus of relation such that there is a specific CRR. On Decorte's interpretation, a divine personal relation (i.e., a divine person) is identical to the divine essence. Hence, the divine essence not only is the foundation of a personal, specific CRR, but the divine essence is also the subject of this personal, specific CRR. Decorte (inadvertently?) implies that for Henry the subject and foundation of a CRR are identical.

However, Henry distinguishes between the subject of a CRR and the absolute foundation of a CRR. Henry not only applies this distinction in the case of creatures but also in the case of divine persons. For Henry, the divine persons are primary substances, i.e., subjects,<sup>60</sup>

58. There is other evidence too. For Henry, only the Son/Word is (and therefore can be) the measure of the divine persons' introspection of their thought and love of the divine essence. See S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 182-190 and references there.

59. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 69, 3, fol. 237rT: "Et sic Pater comparatus ad seipsum proprietate sua qua habet esse, et etiam substantia sua absoluta dicitur idem sibi, licet comparatus ad Filium illa proprietate siue secundum illam, nec idem nec diuersus dicitur Filio [...]. Et similiter econuerso Filius relatiue proprietate sua qua habet esse ad Patrem, dicitur idem sibi licet non Patri [...]." Also HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 69, 3 ad 2, fol. 238rZ: "[...] etsi Pater simpliciter est in Filio, et econuerso, et sunt unum et idem, secundum quod dicit Christus dei Filius, Ioannis 10, 'Ego et Pater unum sumus,' per quod etiam sunt idem, non tamen haec est uera, 'Pater est Filius,' aut econuerso, nisi Pater insit Filio aut econuerso, sub tali modo, ut scilicet Patri formaliter conueniret filiatio sicut et paternitas, et Filio paternitas sicut filiatio, quod falsum est et impossibile, nisi ponatur personarum confusio secundum Sabellium." Also cf. *Ql.* III, 4, ad 1, fol. 52vT. See also S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 24-25.

60. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 69, 1, fol. 234vB: "Idcirco ergo in diuinis est summa identitas quantum est ex parte substantiae seu essentiae singularis significatae in omnibus quae sunt in diuinis, licet diuersimode, ut dictum est. Verumtamen cum dicit Philosophus quod 'idem' sequitur 'unum' in substantia, intelligendum est quod ibi sumitur 'substantia' communissime ad tres modos substantiae. Vno enim modo substantia est natura et essentia

and the divine essence is a singular existing (extra-mental) universal that exists in the persons.<sup>61</sup> (Interestingly, Henry's claim that the divine persons are primary substances and the divine essence is an indivisible universal seems to have gone unnoticed in contemporary and medieval receptions of Henry's Trinitarian theology.<sup>62</sup>) A divine person is a subject of the divine essence and a specific CRR. The Father is the Father of the Son. The divine essence is not the Father of the Son, but rather the divine essence (necessarily) bestows on the Father the active power for generating the Son. The person of the Father is the subject that has the real relation to the Son, and not the divine essence.<sup>63</sup>

substantialis de praedicamento substantiae, quae in diuinis est sola deitas et se habet ad modum substantiae secundae in praedicamento substantiae, in eo videlicet quod communis et communicabilis est pluribus diuinis suppositis. Alio autem modo substantia est suppositum habens in se substantiam et naturam primo modo dictam et se habet in diuinis ad modum substantiae primae in praedicamento substantiae, qualis substantia in diuinis est quaelibet persona diuina. [...]" Also cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 53, 1, fols. 61rD-vG; 60, 7, fol. 170rO; 67, 2, fols. 216vM-217rM; *Ql.* IV, 1, ed. G.A. WILSON, p. 3, 15-20: "Dicendum quod relatio in diuinis non est nisi respectus quidam unius personae ad aliam fundatarum in eadem essentia, quas distinguit ab invicem; propter quod necessario habet esse in duobus, licet diversimode, scilicet in divina essentia in quantum existit in ipsa persona, ut in suo fundamento, et in ipsa persona in quantum persona subsistit in essentia, ut in constituto per eam."

61. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 70, 2, ad 4, fol. 246vL (emphasis mine): "Non sic tres personas dicimus unam essentiam et unum Deum tanquam ex materia una tria quaedam subsistant. In status enim aequalibus plus auri est tres simul quam singulae. In illa vero essentia trinitatis nullo modo ita est, neque sicut dicimus tres homines eiusdem contemperationis. Nam in his non tantum est unus quantum duo. Sed nec est contrarium quod dicit Damascenus, 'Omne substantia est, particulare vero hypostasis,' quia non dicit hoc nisi propter uniformem modum praedicandi essentiam de qualibet hypostasi, et uniuersale de suppositis. Licet in hoc sit differentia, quod (ut dicit) in diuinis quod est commune est idem re et differt ratione tantum in suppositis, in creaturis autem commune est idem ratione tantum, et differt re in suppositis. Et quia haec difficilia sunt intellectui carnali, dicit Augustinus ibidem: 'Qui potest capere capiat, qui autem non potest, credat et oret ut intelligat.'" Also HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 75, 6, fols. 310rN, vP (emphasis mine): "Loquendo enim de uniuersali proprie, uerum est quod in diuinis non potest esse pars uniuersalis. Vniuersale uero improprie loquendo de uniuersali est commune secundum rem et est forma pluribus communis communitate unius rei singularis existentis in illis, et tota in quolibet illorum [scil. the persons] sub diuersis tamen rationibus quibus distinguuntur ab inuicem uel saltem quomodo distinguuntur personae diuinae rationibus notionalibus proprietatum personalium. [...] Et quia essentia diuina sic est omnia illa [scil. divine attributes], propterea ens dictum ab huiusmodi essentia continet illa quasi partes subiectiuas sub se et respectu illorum est quasi totum uniuersale."

62. For discussion, see S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 43-46.

63. See n. 65 below.



If one were to accept Decorte's interpretation that for Henry the divine persons, i.e., real relations, are identical with their absolute foundation (*res*), i.e., the divine essence, then one would say that the divine essence is the subject and foundation of the personal real relations. On this view, the divine essence is the Father of the Son, and the divine essence is the Son of the Father. We find just such an interpretation suggested by Juan Carlos Flores, who seems to follow Decorte's interpretation that a foundation (*res*) and a real relation founded on it are identical. Flores says:

The divine essence as active generation (*generare*)-the Father-has a real respect towards itself as passive generation (*generari*)-the Son, and vice versa.<sup>64</sup>

In this passage Flores suggests that the divine essence is the subject of the real relation of active generation toward itself. The divine essence is what is really related, and it is the object to which it is really related. But Henry does not say this. Henry explicitly says that a divine person—and not the divine essence—is the subject of a personal property, i.e., a specific CRR. Henry is emphatic that (e.g.,) the Father is the Father of the Son and not the divine essence. Following John of Damascus, Henry disagrees with those who say that the personal properties are names of the divine essence. For Henry, as it is for John of Damascus (on Henry's understanding), a divine person is the subject of a distinguishing personal relation:

But John of Damascus says, "the distinguishing personal properties are proper to the persons and not to [the divine] nature," that is, the [personal] properties are determinative of the persons and not the [divine] nature. [...] In this way, a [personal] property does not exist in the essence but only in a person. [...] For the [personal] properties determine the persons, such that by this property of a person [this is the person] who generates, and by that other [personal property] of a person [that is the person] who is generated.<sup>65</sup>

Although the divine essence is not the subject of the personal CRRs, it is the foundation of the personal CRRs. For example, the divine

64. J.C. FLORES, *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity*, p. 174.

65. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 55, 1, ad 3, fol. 106vQ: "Sed Ioannes Damascenus [...] ait 'Idiomata sunt characteristica hypostaseon et non naturae,' idest, proprietates determinatiuae sunt personarum et non naturae." Also *Summa*, 56, 1, ad 2, fol. 113vD: "sic proprietates non habet esse in essentia sed tantum in persona," and *Summa*, 56, 2, ad 1, fol. 114rI: "ita enim proprietates determinat personas, ut hac proprietate hypostasis sit generans, et illa alia hypostasis sit generata."

essence is the Father's active power for the generation of the Son. That is, the divine essence is the foundation of the Father's distinguishing personal relation qua active power for the generation of the Son. Likewise, the divine essence is the foundation of the Son's distinguishing personal relation qua passive power for being communicated to the Son. (I discuss this further below.) Thus, the divine essence is the foundation, and not the subject, of the distinguishing personal CRRs.<sup>66</sup>

I take it that the passages above are jointly decisive evidence that Henry denies that the divine essence or nature is the subject of the personal CRRs. The Father is the Father of the Son, and not the divine essence. The Son is the Son of the Father, not the divine essence. Note that the personal properties are incompatible for the same subject. With regard to numerically the same generative action, the agent and the product cannot be identical. The Father cannot generate himself; he generates the Son. The Son cannot generate himself; he is generated by the Father.<sup>67</sup>

The last two questions regarding CRRs and the Trinity are these. How can numerically the same thing (*res*) ground diverse specific differences that contract the genus of relation? Lastly, how are we to understand the co-specificity of the divine persons if the persons are specifically diverse CRRs?

Henry responds to the first question by claiming that things (*res*) in the category of substance, quality, or quantity by nature can be the

66. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 59, 2, fol.138vS (emphasis mine): "potentia ergo generandi eius de quo quis generat in diuinis non est nisi potentia secundum rationem et sic similiter id de quo generans generat est quasi subiectum actus et materia solum secundum rationem: — non est ergo in diuinis id de quo generatur genitum nisi secundum rationem tantum, habendo tantummodo rationem subiecti siue materiae et potentiae passivae. Secundum rem tamen in diuinis reali generatione aliquis generatur de ipso, quia cum potentia generandi de qua vel quasi ut de qua est generatio, non est secundum se nisi in materia et ipsius materiae, licet in diuinis non sit aliquo vel alicuius proprie ut in subiecto et subiecti, sed ut in fundamento et fundamenti, et per ipsum fundamentum inquantum est fundamentum in eo in quo est fundamentum potentiae." Also *Summa*, 59, 2, fol. 144rT: "sic vere dicitur quod Filius non generatur nisi de substantia Patris, quia oportet ut primo ordine naturae immediate diuina essentia habeat esse in Patre sub proprietate paternitatis, si de essentia illa diuina debeat generari Filius, licet proprie diuina essentia non est quasi subiectum et materia generationis Filii, nisi ut est quasi media inter proprietatem paternitatis et filiationis, indifferens ad ambas."

67. Cf. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 58, 1, ad 3, fols. 125vZ-126vG.

foundation of specifically diverse CRRs. He appeals to the distinction between a 'thing' and the diverse ways that the same 'thing' can be the foundation of a specific CRR. These diverse ways of being the foundation are explained by diverse attributes grounded in that 'thing.' In *Quodlibet* V, 6, and *Summa*, 63, 3, Henry distinguishes between a 'thing' *simpliciter* and a 'thing' as the origin and principle of specifically diverse CRRs. Numerically the same 'thing' grounds diverse attributes such as the 'thing's' active power and passive power, and so can be the foundation for specifically diverse CRRs.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, a white 'thing' is similar to another white 'thing,' and dissimilar to a black 'thing.' For Henry, the similarity and dissimilarity CRRs are founded on numerically the same white 'thing,' though in diverse ways according to the attributes of being (one, many) grounded in the white 'thing.'

Henry takes his general metaphysical doctrine of the different ways numerically the same 'thing' is the foundation of specifically diverse CRRs and applies it to the Trinity of divine persons. According to Henry, there is an active power grounded in the one divine essence (a 'thing') for the generation of the Son. Moreover, there is a passive power grounded in the one divine essence for the divine essence's being communicated to the Son.<sup>69</sup> Note that this active power and this passive power are grounded in numerically the same 'thing': the divine essence.<sup>70</sup> These metaphysical potencies (respectively) explain

68. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 66, 2, fol. 211rB-C, 66, 4, fols. 214rV-vV, and *Ql.* XIV, 2, fol. 560rD. Also *Ql.* V, 6, fol. 162rP (quoted above in n. 29).

69. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 58, 3, fol. 134vG: "Vnde Pater non dicitur Pater quia generans nec econuerso, sed praecise quia secum habet Filium a se genitum, et tam fundatur paternitas super ipsum generantem ut iam generauit, quam super ipsum ut iam generat, aut super actum, aut super potentiam generandi actiue, et similiter filiatio super ipsum genitum. Alio vero modo dicit respectum generantis ad genitum mediante actu generationis, qui tripliciter potest mediate inter generantem et genitum. Vno modo inquantum generans est 'aptus generare.' Alio modo ut est 'potens generare.' Tertio modo ut est 'actu generans.' Et primo modo significatur nomine 'generatiui,' secundo modo nomine 'potentiae generandi,' tertio modo ut est ipso 'actu generandi.' Et sic eadem proprietates secundum rem et ex ordine ad fundatum et ex ordine ad obiectum importatur istis quatuor quae sunt [1] 'generatiuum,' [2] 'potens generare,' [3] 'generans,' [4] 'Pater,' alia autem et alia secundum rationem tantum ex diuerso modo respiciendi obiectum."

70. In *Ql.* III, 4, fol. 50vL, Henry could be interpreted as saying that the divine essence and the Father's personal property are jointly sufficient for the Father's active power (*potentia*) for the intellectual generation of the Son. However, later in *Summa*, 54,

the possibility of the Father's active generation of the Son and the possibility of the Son's being intellectually generated by the Father, and in turn the (extra-mental) distinction between the Father and the Son.

What then of the second question, "how are we to understand the co-specificity of the divine persons if they are specifically diverse CRRs?"? The upshot of Henry's response is to distinguish specifically diverse substances from specifically diverse CRRs. In the category of substance the persons are generically and specifically the same, so to speak.<sup>71</sup> Yet in the category of relation the persons are generically the same but specifically diverse, so to speak. What matters for the substance kind of a subject is the subject's substance. On Henry's view, the divine persons (primary substances) 'are' the same secondary

8, ad 3, fol. 102rM Henry says that we can use the term "active power" in two ways. In one way it can refer to something's or someone's power to do something, and in another way it can refer to something's or someone's exercising a power. Thus, one could interpret Henry's discussion of the Father's active power for the intellectual generation of the Son in *Ql. III*, 4, fol. 50vL as saying that the divine essence and the Father's personal property are jointly sufficient for the Father's active power taken in the second sense of "active power." Moreover, one could say that for Henry the Father's "active power" taken in the first sense is grounded in the divine essence alone. For discussion of this and references, see S.M. WILLIAMS, *Henry of Ghent on the Trinity: Metaphysics and Philosophical Psychology*, pp. 125-133.

71. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 70, 2, ad 5, fol. 247rN-O (emphasis mine): "[...] dicit Proclus in propositione sua 7, 'Omne productuum alterius melius est quam id quod producit. Aliter enim omnia entia essent aequalia.' [...] Vnde et in *generatione uniuoca ab inuicem eorum quae sunt sub eadem specie specialissima, productum necessario est aequale in productione secundum formam producenti, puta ignis generans igni generato* aut equus equo. In quibus si aliqua contingit inaequalitas aut dissimilitudo, illa est per accidens et accidit essentiae et est in accidentalibus tantum, quae nequaquam potest contingere in diuinis, propter identitatem substantiae singularis et omnium absolutorum in singulis personis. Hoc enim est generale *quod semper generatum per generationem naturalem pertingit ad perfectionem naturae quae est in generante.* [...] Vnde Hilarius lib. de Synod. ait 'Tolle corporum infirmitates, tolle conceptus initium: omnis filius secundum naturalem natiuitatem aequalis est patri, quia est eius similitudo naturae.' Quod igitur (ut dictum est) in diuinis principale, non principale, primum et secundum, *non pertinent ad virtutes agentium, sed solummodo pertinent ad rationem originis producti a producente*, idcirco de hoc nihil ad aequalitatem, quae sequitur quantitatem, non relationem, secundum superius determinata. Propter quod dicit Augustinus Contra Maximinum: 'Originis est quod quid de quo sit, aequalitatis autem quantum sit.' Cf. *Summa*, 70, 2, ad 6, fol. 248vX: "Nunc autem ut habet rationem absoluti una et eadem singularis potentia est in tribus personis, sicut una et eadem substantia aut bonitas. Et ideo tres personae aequales sunt secundum potentiam prout ipsa nominat substantiam, nec Pater superat Filium potestate [...]." See also *Summa*, 58, 1, fol. 125rS.

substance. Each divine person is a subject of the same divine essence or nature. The persons' sameness of essence not only is sameness of substance kind, but also essential numerical sameness without identity. Henry perhaps nowhere more clearly affirms that the divine persons are numerically the same essence than when he claims that the divine essence is a singular universal, i.e., numerically one thing (*res*), that exists in the three divine persons. Henry says:

When speaking about a universal properly, it is true that in God there cannot be a universal part. But a universal, when speaking improperly of a universal, is common according to reality (*secundum rem*) and it is the form common to several by an existence of one singular thing in [the persons], and the whole [is] in each of [the persons], nevertheless under diverse manners (*rationes*) in which [the persons] are distinguished from each other or the way in which the divine persons are sufficiently distinguished by the notional nature of personal properties.<sup>72</sup>

The persons are co-specific because each person's nature is exactly the same. The persons are the same substance kind, and the persons are essentially numerically the same thing (*res*) as the divine essence without being identical to it or to each other.

## 7. Conclusion

In section 2 I discussed Rea and Brower's notion of numerical sameness without identity, and some varieties of numerical sameness without identity: contingent (accidental), and essential, numerical sameness without identity. In section 3 I surveyed Henry's general theory of CRRs, and in section 4 argued that central to Henry's general theory of real relations is the notion of numerical sameness without identity. A CRR is numerically the same thing (*res*) as its absolute foundation but is not identical to its foundation. What enables Henry to get to this notion is his doctrine of 'things' and his view that the foundation of a specific CRR is the CRR's specific difference. Furthermore, I showed that Henry has a systematic way of distinguishing

72. HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, 75, 6, fol. 310rN; cf. n. 61 above. Cf. *Summa*, 75, 6, fol. 312vI: "Et est in sic uniuersali multo verior et perfectior uniuocatio eorum quae quasi partes subiectiuas continet, quam sit indiuiduorum in creaturis sub eadem specie. [...] Quia dicto modo uniuersale in Deo significat unam rem existentem contentam in quasi pluribus, subiectam, non plurificatam." See also *Summa*, 70, 2 ad 4, fol. 246vL.

accidental (contingent) numerical sameness without identity and essential numerical sameness without identity—in the realm of creatures—by appealing to his major intentional distinction for the former, and his minor intentional distinction for the latter. However, in the case of the divine personal CRRs that are essentially numerically the same thing (*res*) as the divine essence without being identical to it, no intentional distinction obtains because of divine necessity and infinity.

In section 5 I compared Henninger's and Decorte's interpretations of Henry's general theory of CRRs. On the one hand, Henninger and Decorte agree that for Henry a CRR is a mode of being: being toward another. On the other hand, they differ with regard to the type of sameness that obtains between a CRR and its foundation. For Henninger, the CRR's 'thing' (*res*) is identical to the 'thing' (*res*) that is the CRR's absolute foundation. For Decorte, a specific CRR and its absolute foundation are identical. I argued that Henninger's interpretation makes the most sense, and that it is consistent with my interpretation that a specific CRR is numerically the same 'thing' as its foundation without being identical to it.

In section 6 I surveyed four Trinitarian issues in connection to my interpretation of Henry's general theory of CRRs. The first issue pertains to the way in which Henry interprets statements like "The Father is God." Whereas Decorte supposes this is an identity statement, I argued that for Henry it is better understood as expressing essential numerical sameness without identity. And, my interpretation, but not Decorte's, shows the way in which Henry plausibly responds to the transitivity of identity objection that is often inferred from the conjunction of (1)-(4).

The second issue is the difference between the subject of a divine personal CRR and the foundation of a divine personal CRR. Decorte suggests that the subject and foundation of a CRR are identical. I showed that if Decorte were right, then the divine essence is the Father of the Son, and the Son of the Father. In response I argued that this is not Henry's position because Henry distinguishes between the subject and foundation of a CRR such that the Father is the Father of the Son, and not the divine essence. As Henry puts it, following John of Damascus, the distinguishing

personal relations belong to the persons and not to the divine essence or nature.

The third issue concerns how numerically the same ‘thing’ can be the foundation of specifically diverse CRRs. Henry’s general theory that numerically the same ‘thing’ can be the foundation of specifically diverse CRRs depends upon his metaphysical doctrine regarding the attributes of being that are grounded in any existing ‘thing.’ Henry applies this general metaphysical theory to the Trinitarian context, in which Henry says that the divine essence is the foundation (*res*) of specifically diverse CRRs because the divine essence grounds diverse metaphysical powers. The divine essence qua active power for the generation of the Son is the foundation of the Father’s personal CRR. The divine essence qua passive power for being communicated to the Son is the foundation of the Son’s personal CRR.

The fourth issue concerns how the divine persons are co-specific if the persons are specifically diverse CRRs. Henry responds by claiming that the persons are specifically and numerically the same ‘thing’ in the category of substance, and generically the same but specifically diverse in the category of relation. Henry most emphatically makes the point that the persons are specifically the same in the category of substance by claiming that the divine essence is a singular, indivisible, universal ‘thing’ that exists in the three persons.

It is clear that Henry tested his general theory of CRRs by applying it to his Trinitarian theology. But it is not obvious whether he first develops his general theory and then applies it to his Trinitarian theology, or develops a Trinitarian theology of CRRs that he then generalizes for all CRRs. Whichever is the case, if we are to understand the way in which Henry’s Trinitarian theology connects to his general theory of CRRs, then we must have a sufficient grasp of Henry’s Trinitarian theology. I argued that Decorte misrepresents Henry’s Trinitarian theology by ascribing to Henry the overly strong claim that a specific CRR is identical to its foundation. I showed that this leads to misunderstanding Henry’s general theory of CRRs. Furthermore, I argued that Henninger gets Henry’s general theory of CRRs right, and that evidence for this is that Henninger’s interpretation is consistent with Henry’s understanding of CRRs in his Trinitarian theology.

What is perhaps ironic is that despite Henninger’s omission of the Trinitarian context in his interpretation of Henry’s general theory of

CRRs, he has interpreted Henry's general theory of CRRs more accurately than Decorte. And, despite the close connection between Henry's general theory of CRRs and Trinitarian theology, Decorte's misrepresenting Henry's Trinitarian theology has led to his misrepresenting Henry's general theory of CRRs. By understanding Henry's general theory of CRRs *via* Henninger and as I presented it in sections 3-4, and Henry's Trinitarian theology as I presented it in section 6, we can now see what the connection is between Henry's general theory of CRRs and Trinitarian theology: numerical sameness without identity.<sup>73</sup>

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