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NON-BEING: EVITERNITY AND TIME IN THE ONTOLOGY OF HENRY OF GHENT

It is commonly known that Heidegger wrote his doctoral dissertation on John Duns Scotus and it is also known that Henry of Ghent, who represents a more Augustinian tradition in the history of thought, was the point of departure for many of the doctrines of Scotus¹. However, the influence of

¹ For specific comments on the influence of Henry on Scotus, cf. Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1955) 447; Id., *Jean Duns Scot: Introduction à ses positions fondamentales* (Paris, 1952) (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, XLII) 10; C. Berubé "Dynamisme psychologique et existence de Dieu chez Jean Duns Scot, J. Maréchal et B. Lonergan," *Antonianum* 48 (1973) 5-6. For studies concerning particular doctrines of Henry that influenced Scotus, cf., for example, Stephen Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being. The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli," *Franciscan Studies*, 25 (1965) 117-150; W. Hoeres, "Wesen und Dasein bei Heinrich von Gent und Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien*, 47 (1965) 121-86; Jerome Brown, "John Duns Scotus on Henry of Ghent's Arguments for Divine Illumination: The Statement of the Case," *Vivarium* 14 (1976) 94-113; Id., "John Duns Scotus on Henry of Ghent's Theory of Knowledge," *The Modern Schoolman* 56 (1978) 1-29; E. J. Ashworth, "Can I speak more clearly than I understand? A Problem of Religious Language in Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus and Ockham," *Studies in Medieval Linguistic Thought, dedicated to G. L. Bursill-Hall*. Ed. K.Koerner, H.-J. Niederehe, R. H. Robins, Benjamin ("Historiographia Linguistica," 7) (Amsterdam, 1980) 29-38; St. Dumont, *Henry of Ghent as a Source for John Duns Scotus's Proof for the Existence of God*, Doctoral dissertation, (Toronto 1983); Id., "The 'quaestio si est' and the Metaphysical Proof for the Existence of God according to Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien* 66 (1984) 335-367; Jerome Brown, "Duns Scotus on the Possibility of Knowing Genuine Truth: the Reply to Henry of Ghent in the 'Lectura prima' and in the 'Ordinatio'," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 51 (1984) 136-82; Id., "The Knowledge Proper to the Separated Soul:

Henry on Scotus, which lead Mauritius in his annotations to Scotus's *Quaestiones super Metaphysica Aristotelis* to remark that Scotus studied Henry's *Quodlibeta* and *Summa* greatly in his youth ², needs a systematic treatment in length. Prior to such a study, important doctrines in Henry's ontology, e.g. non-being and time, deserve preliminary attention. Henry distinguishes different types of beings and different kinds of duration. The three types of duration, eternity, time and eviternity ³, are measures of different types of being.

Henry of Ghent, the most important secular master of theology in Paris from 1276 to 1293, wrote in the shadow of Thomas Aquinas. Prior to Henry, Thomas had distinguished the same three types of duration: eternity, eviternity and time ⁴. The genius of Thomas was, according to J. Owens, "to make eviternity depend not on the length of the duration but upon the unity of permanence, as opposed to succession, in the existence or activity of a created thing."⁵ The being of the eviternal is acquired from another and thus eviternity measures being that has a beginning; the being of eternal does not receive being from another ⁶. For Thomas, eternity pertains to that being which does not have an efficient cause, eviternity to that being which does have an efficient cause, and time to that act which has an efficient cause and an end of duration ⁷. The distinction between these three types of duration

Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien*, 66 (1984) 335-67; St. P. Marrone, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus on the Knowledge of Being," *Speculum*, 63 (1988) 22-57.

² Joannis Duns Scoti, *Quaestiones subtilissimae super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* ed. Vives, *Opera omnia*, vol. 7 (Paris, 1893), 247b: "Studuit enim maxime in iuventute in *Summa* et *Quodlibeto* Henrici..."

³ For literature treating eviternity (*aevum*) prior to Henry, cf. Isadore, *Etymol.*, V, 38,4; Ernout-Meillet, *Dictionnaire Etymol.*, s.v. *aevus*; Denis O'Brien, "Aristote et l'*aion*," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 85 (1890) 94-108; J. Owens, "Material Substance-Temporal or Eviternal?" *New Scholasticism*, 56 (1982) 442-62. For Henry of Ghent on eviternity, cf. P. Porro, "Enrico di Gand e il problema dell'unicità dell'*aevum*," *Medioevo*, 13 (1987) 123-93; Id., "Enrico di Gand sul problema della realtà del tempo in Agostino (*Quodl. III*, q. 11)," *L'umanesimo di Sant'Agostino*. Atti del Congresso Internazionale, Bari 28-30 ottobre 1986, a cura di M. Fabris, (Bari, 1988) 589-611.

⁴ Thomas de Aquino, *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 2, aa. 1-2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 465-472); Id., *Summa Theologia*, I, 10, 4-6 (ed. Leon., IV, 98-105).

⁵ J. Owens, "Material Substance-Temporal or Eviternal?" *New Scholasticism*, 56 (1982) 442.

⁶ Thomas de Aquino, *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 2, a. 1 (ed. Mandonnet I, 468): "Sed quia esse aeviternorum est acquisitum ab alio, ideo aevum mensurat esse quod habet principium; non autem aeternitas, quae mensurat esse quod non est acquisitum ab alio."

⁷ *Ibid.*: "...aeternitas respicit illud esse quod non habet principium efficiens; aevum autem

is rooted in Thomas's metaphysics — each pertains to a certain type of being, — and, more specifically, the distinction between eviternity and eternity is based upon his understanding of the causality of being, which in part led him to observe that the distinction between eternity and eviternity did not receive detailed attention by his predecessors⁸.

Henry, as Thomas before him, raises the discussion of duration to a metaphysical level. In the philosophy of the *Doctor Sollemnis*, eternity, eviternity and time reflect certain modes of being. They are the measures of the beings or “*quaedam morae rei in essendo*.”⁹ There is only a diversity or plurality of these durations because there is a diversity in the species and way of being. For each type of being, there is a corresponding “*propter*” mode of duration in being¹⁰. Since there are, according to Henry, three general types of being, there are three respective types of duration. The first type of being is substance which is immutable, to which corresponds the duration of eternity. The second type of being is of created immaterial forms and separated souls, which although having an origin in being and persevered in being by another, exist fixed in divine contemplation. These beings are measured by eviternity. Finally there are those created beings that experience generation and corruption in the flux of the changing created

quod habet tale principium; tempus vere respicit actum qui habet principium et finem durationis, ut mensuratur tempore.”

⁸ *Ibid.*: “Ad primum igitur dicendum, quod, sicut patet ex praedictis, aevum nihil aliud est quam aeternitas quaedam participata; unde non inveniuntur auctores antiqui multum curasse de differentia aevi et aeternitatis....”

⁹ Henricus de Gandavo, *Quodlibeta Magistri Henrici Goethals A Gandavo Doctoris Sollemnis. Socii Sorbonici, Et Archidiaconi Tornacensis, Cum Duplici Tabella*, ab Iodoco Badio Ascensio, 1518. *Quodlibet V*, q. 13, ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, I) fol. 171vB: “aeternitas, aevum et tempus non sunt nisi quaedam morae rei in essendo, per hoc quod non sunt nisi mensurae ipsius esse rei in qua moratur in essendo respicientes esse rei non sub ratione eius quidquid est aut quale, sed sub ratione qua quantum quid est.” At the time of writing this article, most, but not all, of Henry's *Quodlibeta* have been critically edited in the Leuven series, HENRICI DE GANDAVO, *Opera Omnia*. If a particular *Quodlibet* is not available in the Leuven series, reference will be to the Badius edition of 1518 as “Henr. de Gand., *Quodl.*, ed. Badius (Paris, 1518)”; if the particular *Quodlibet* is available in the Leuven series, reference to the volume shall appear with the name of the particular editor, e.g. *Quodlibet I* appears “Henr. de Gand., *Quodl. I* ed. Macken (Leuven-Leiden, 1979).”

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: “Diversitatem igitur in specie et qualitatem dictarum mensurarum oportet accipere secundum diversitatem mensuratorum et secundum quod differunt specie et modo essendi, differunt et ipsae mensurae, quia secundum hoc differt duratio sive mora in essendo....Proprio enim modo essendi respondet proprius modus durationis in essendo.”

universe ¹¹. These types of being can best be illustrated by five characteristics that distinguish created being from uncreated being in the ontology of Henry: 1) the relationship of *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*; 2) the simplicity and necessity of God and the composition and contingency of creatures; 3) the immutability of God; 4) the non-being of creatures; and 5) the participatory nature of created being.

Henry of Ghent in his ontology makes a distinction between *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*, but this distinction is neither a mere logical one nor a real distinction in the sense that Giles of Rome elaborated Thomas's real distinction ¹². Henry and Scotus share this rejection of a logical and a

¹¹ Id., *Quaestiones ordinariae (Summa)*, art. 31, q. 2, ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 14,70- (15,)82: "Unde et secundum diversitatem esse rei et modi essendi eius diversificatur talis mensura, et est triplex secundum diversitatem triplicis esse et triplicis modi essendi in rebus. Est enim quoddam esse omnino immutabile, et substantia et operatione, ut est divinum esse... cuius duratio sive quantitas durationis in essendo propter eius immutabilitatem est semper fixa stans et eodem modo perservans, nec incipiens nec deficiens, nec secundum aliquid in ipso existens, incipere ac deficere potens, et appellatur aeternitas. Est autem quoddam aliud esse quod, etsi forte in immutabilitate solidetur alterius munere et in substantia rei et in eiusmodi operatione, ut nec ipsum nec aliquid in se umquam deficiat aut varietur, sed semper fixum stet et eodem modo perseveret, inceptit tamen esse et deficere potest ab esse, vel ab aliquo quod in ipso est, et hoc ex defectibilitate propriae naturae; cuiusmodi est esse substantiarum separatarum, quarum duratio sive quantitas durationis in essendo propter earum immutabilitatem in divina contemplatione... fixa est et stans et eodem modo perseverans, licet quandoque incepta et potens deficere; et appellatur aevum. Tertium vero esse quod et inceptit et deficiet, et in substantia rei et in eius operatione continuum fluxum habens et mutationem, cuiusmodi est esse generabilium et corruptibilium, quorum duratio sive quantitas durationis in essendo propter eorum mutationem in continuo fluxu est et successione, incipiens et deficere potens et appellatur tempus." At this moment, only R. Macken's edition of *Summa, art. 31-34* appears in the Leuven series HENRICI DE GANDAVO, *Opera omnia*. Future references to these critically edited articles shall appear as "Henr. de Gand., *Summa*, ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1991)." When the critical edition is not available, reference will be to the Badius edition of 1520, reprinted by the Franciscan Institute, and will appear "Henr. de Gand., *Summa* ed. Badius (Paris, 1520)".

¹² Henry treats the distinction of *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae* in many places. See, for example, Henr. de Gand., *Quodl. I*, q. 7 et 8 ed. Macken (Leuven-Leiden, 1979) 27, 1-46,78; *ibid.*, q. 9, 49,53-59; Id., *Quodl. II*, q. 1 ed. Wielockx (Leuven-Leiden, 1983) 4,42- (5,) 53; Id., *Quodl. III*, q. 9 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, I) fol. 60vN-62rS; Id., *Quodl. X*, q. 7 ed. Macken (Leuven-Leiden, 1981) 163sq.; Id., *Quodl. XI*, q. 3 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, II), fol. 440vH-450rK; Id., *Summa*, art. 21, q. 2 ed. Badius (Paris, 1520, I), fol. 123vE-125vV. This distinction has been examined in the secondary literature. Cf., for example, Gomez-Cafferena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en la metafisica de Enrique de Gand*, Ed. Pont. Università Gregoriana ("Analecta Gregoriana," 93) (Rome, 1958) 65-92 and 263-69; Paulus, J., *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*,

real distinction between *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*¹³. In Henry's metaphysics, not all essences actually exist. A being is only capable of not being if its *esse actualis existentiae* can be absent from its *esse essentiae*. Since God can never not be, his *esse actualis existentiae* can never be absent from his *esse essentiae*. God does not have the potency not to be, and consequently, he has being of necessity. This necessity is a necessity in the sense that it is impossible for this to be in any other way *per se*, not in the sense that it is impossible *per aliud*. The impossibility of God's not having

Vrin ("Etudes de philosophie médiévale" 25) (Paris, 1938) 21sq. and 298-304; Marrone, St., *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent* (Speculum Anniversary Monographs 11) (Cambridge, Ma., 1985) 113-114 (esp. notes 59 and 61); Porro, P., *Enrico di Gand. La Via delle proposizioni universali*. (Vestigia. Studi e strumenti di storiografia filosofica, 2) (Bari, 1990) 17-71; Hocedez, E. "Gilles de Rome et Henri de Gand sur la distinction réelle," *Gregorianum*, 8 (1927) 358-385; Id., "Le premier Quodlibet d'Henri de Gand," *Gregorianum* 9 (1928) 92-117; Id., "Deux questions touchant la distinction réelle de l'essence et de l'existence," *Gregorianum* 10 (1929) 365-86; Id., *Aegidii Romani Theoremata de esse et essentia. Texte précédé d'une introduction historique et critique* (Louvain 1930) 1-117; Paulus, J. "Les disputes d'Henri de Gand et de Gilles de Rome sur la distinction de l'essence et de l'existence," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-Age*, 13 (1940-42) 323-58; Hoeres, W. "Wesen und Dasein bei Heinrich von Gent und Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien*, 47 (1965) 121-186; Wippel, J. "Godfrey of Fontaines and Henry of Ghent's Theory of Intentional Distinction between Essence and Existence," *Sapientiae procerum amore*-Mél. J.P. Müller. Ed Th. W. Köhler, Ed. Anselmiana ("Studia anselmiana" 63) (Rome, 1974) 289-321; Cunningham, F., "Some Presuppositions in Henry of Ghent," *Pensamiento* 33 (1977), 123-154; Wippel, J., "The Reality of Non-existing Possibles according to Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Godfrey of Fontaines," *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1981) 729-58 (Reprinted under a slightly different title in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington 1984), 163-189); Macken, R. "Les diverses applications de la distinction intentionnelle chez Henri de Gand," *Sprache und Erkenntnis im Mittelalter*, ("Miscellanea Mediaevalia" 13) (Berlin, 1981, II) 769-76; Wippel, J., "The Relationship between Essence and Existence in Late-Thirteenth-Century Thought: Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, and James of Viterbo," *Philosophies of Existence. Ancient and Medieval*, ed. P. Morewedge (New York, 1982) 131-64; Id., "Essence and Existence," *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy. From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100-1600* ed. N. Kretzmann et al., (Cambridge, 1982) 403-407; Wilson, G. "Henry of Ghent and René Descartes on the Unity of Man," *Franziskanische Studien* 64 (1982) 97-110.

¹³ For Scotus on the distinction of *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*, cf. A. Wolter, "The Formal Distinction," *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*. III. *John Dun Scotus, 1265-1965* (Washington, D.C., 1965) 54-59; A. J. O'Brien, "Duns Scotus' Teaching on the Distinction Between Essence and Existence," *The New Scholasticism*, 38 (1964) 61-77; W. Hoeres, "Wesen und Dasein bei Heinrich von Gent und Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien*, 47 (1965) 121-186.

the potency not to be is due to his simplicity in being and essence, a simplicity in which there is an identity of *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*¹⁴. In contrast, creatures have a composition of *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae* because they do not have being in and of themselves. They must acquire their existence by an act of divine free will and, because their being of existence can be separated from their essence, they are corruptible¹⁵. Henry's understanding of *esse* departs from Thomas's. Because the distinctions of duration in the thought of each are rooted in these nuanced understandings of *esse*, there are subtle differences in each thinker's treatment of eternity, eviternity and time.

The utter simplicity of God in Henry's philosophy ensures that the duration by which he is measured is eternity. A creature lacks this simplicity because that which it is, its essence, is not its *esse existentiae*: it has this being of existence from another. A created being has not only its being of essence but also its being of existence from another, the creator, and consequently it cannot necessarily have its being of existence from itself. The essence of created being is indifferent to actual existence, because a created essence has its existence as an effect of God and also because

¹⁴ Henr. de Gand., *Summa*, art. 30, q. 2, ed. Badius (Paris, 1520, I) fol. 179rD: "Nunc autem nihil ens potest non esse nisi per hoc quod esse suae actualis existentiae potest abesse suae essentiae per casum eius in non esse, sicut contingit in creaturis, ut videbitur loquendo de esse creaturae. Non autem potest hoc contingere in Deo, quia in ipso sunt idem penitus re et intentione essentiae et esse actuale.... Absolute igitur dicendum quod Deus non habet potentiam ut possit non esse, sed habet esse de necessitate, illa necessitate qua, secundum Philosophum, V^o Metaphysicae, necessarium dicitur id quod impossibile est ut sit alio modo.... Descriptio enim necessarii, illa scilicet quod impossibile est quod sit alio modo, duobus modis est intelligenda, quorum primus est quod impossibile est quod sit alio modo per se, et hoc est necessarium simpliciter, quem quidem modum quidam appellant inevitabilem in esse. Secundus est, quod est sic propter aliud, quem quidam dicunt debitum et necessarium propter aliud.... Primum autem est in solo Deo et hoc propter eius omnimodam simplicitatem in esse et essentia.... Manifestum igitur quod primum necessarium in rei veritate est simplex et haec simplicitas, identitatis scilicet esse existentiae cum essentia, dat Deo quod omnino non potest non esse. Compositio autem esse talis in creaturis cum essentia quae de se habet non esse, est causa quare corruptibilis est omnis creatura."

¹⁵ Id., *Quodl. I*, q. 7 et 8, ed. R. Macken (Leuven-Leiden, 1979) 36, 19-21 where Henry appeals to Avicenna and argues that a creature does not have being from the nature of its essence, but acquires its *esse* from another: "Et quod creatura habens esse post non esse, quod non esse habet ex natura sua in re, non in intellectu solo, necessario incipiat post non esse duratione, manifeste probat Avicenna...."

created essences are indifferent to universal and particular being. The being of the creator is necessary; the being of creatures is contingent ¹⁶.

Henry maintains, as Aristotle taught, that being is to be understood in a multiplicity of different ways and not equivocally. First and foremost, being can be divided into that which is the measure of being and that which is measured. The first refers to the nature of the thing simply understood, without any additions. The second refers to the nature of a thing, but with certain additions. Being simply understood, that is in the first sense, is pure being without anything added to it from another. This is the being of God. To this simplicity of being one can contrast other beings, namely those which happen to exist. These beings are composed and they lack the simplicity of the first being. In his *Quodlibet XI*, q. 11, Henry describes these two types of beings. The first is characterized by a certain simplicity, clarity and spiritual purity; the second by a certain grotesqueness, obscurity and conjunction with impurity ¹⁷. Today, these descriptions, viz., "purity," "impurity," "grotesqueness," have primarily an ethical significance. As they are used here by Henry, their primary significance seems to be metaphysical, i. e. these evaluations are of being as such, not of the moral activities or judgments of beings.

¹⁶ Id., *Summa*, art. 32, q. 5 ed. Badius (Paris, 1520, I) fol. 196vC: "Ad cuius intellectum sciendum secundum superius determinata, quod in Deo res quae ipse est, est ipsum esse eius, et non simpliciter esse, sed est quoddam necesse esse. A cuius simplicitate deficit omnis creatura, scilicet quia ipsa res quae ipsa est, non est eius esse, sed habet ab alio esse tam essentiae quam existentiae...a quo non habet necesse esse ipsius existentiae, eo quod ex se est possibile esse, per indifferentiam se habens ad esse et non esse. Propter quod, sicut essentia divina dicit aliquid quod est necesse esse, sic essentia creaturae dicit aliquid cui ab alio contingit esse."

¹⁷ Id., *Quodl. XI*, q. 11 ed. Badius (Paris 1518, II) fol. 465vN: "Ens dicitur multipliciter, et non aequivoce. Dividatur prima divisione in id quod est mensura, et in id quod est mensuratum, sic quod in primo membro divisionis stet ratio nominis secundum naturam rei simpliciter significatam per nomen absque omni alia additione. In secundo vero membro stet per alicuius additionem quod est extra naturam rei ut per nomen significatur simpliciter. Et sic hoc nomen ens quod imponitur ab actu essendi simpliciter, dividitur in ens quod non est nisi esse purum, quia nihil praeter esse, et per hoc est in fine simplicitatis, cuiusmodi est Deus..., et in ens cui convenit esse quod in suo significato includit aliquid praeter rationem esse. Et per hoc cadit in compositione et deficit a simplicitate primi entis, cuiusmodi est creaturae essentia, quae pertinet ad genus praedicamenti quod non tantum nominat esse, sed etiam aliquid cui convenit esse...." Cf. etiam, *ibid.*, fol. 466rO: "...in ipsa mensura est sub quadam simplicitate et claritate et puritate spirituali, in ipso mensurato sub quadam grossitie, obscuritate et impuritatibus admixtione."

The existence of creatures is not simple and absolute. This type of existence is the existence of the creator. The existence of creatures is an existence that is dependent upon the care of the creator. This dependency is twofold: creatures are dependent for their initial existence upon the act of the creator and they are dependent for the subsequent conservation in existence upon a different act of God¹⁸. In contrast to Thomas, who had maintained that creation and conservation in existence are one and the same act of God, Henry regards these as two separate actions¹⁹, because the action by which a being is created is sudden, atomic, and lacking temporal dimensions, whereas the action by which a created being is conserved is continuous.

Since eternity is a duration in being of something eternal, duration in being refers to two elements: first, the ends of being in respect to its beginning and end; and second, the way of being concerning movement and stability. God is a necessary being and he has his being of existence by his essence. He can in no sense not exist. Because his existence is inseparable from his essence, he has neither beginning nor end. The mode of being and duration of being that has its existence by its own essence is completely simple and immutable. This can only be the case if this being is without variation. In contrast, the being of creatures is participatory and composite. This being is characterized by variation in many different forms²⁰.

¹⁸ Id., *Quodl. X*, q. 7 ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1982) 154,25-30: "...re vera existere creaturae non est existere simpliciter et absolute, sed solius esse creatoris est tale, sed esse creaturae non est existere nisi sub quadam dependentia ad manutentionem creatoris, et ita in quodam respectu quem creatura habet ad Deum, primo ex actu creationis, secundo ex actu conservationis."

¹⁹ In the immediately preceding note, Henry's language is quite precise and deliberate: the action by which a creature comes into being is different from the action by which this being is conserved in being afterwards. That these two actions are distinct is a re-iteration of Henry's claim in his *Quodl. I*, q. 7 et 8: "Quamquam ergo res in posterius possit conservari in esse, ut non desinat esse propter continuationem actus conservandi, non tamen in ante posset esse nisi incipiat post non esse, propter simplicitatem creationis qua ei acquiritur esse. Unde patet quod valde insipienter dicunt aliqui quod eadem actione Deus res creat et conservat..." (*Quodl. I*, q. 7 et 8, ed. Macken (Leuven-Leiden, 1979) 37,51-56). Commenting on this passage, Dales writes "So Henry not only defends the position that the non-being of the world preceded its being by duration; he also attributes it to Avicenna. He then tries to show that this is necessary, and in the process attacks one of Aquinas's characteristic doctrines, namely that the act of creating and conserving are the same." (R. Dales, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 18) (Leiden, 1990) 167).

²⁰ Cf. Henr. de Gand., *Summa*, art. 31, q. 1 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 4,14-(5,)34: "Dicendum ad hoc, quod cum aeternitas dicat durationem in essendo rei aeternae,

God has being formally, from his own essence and not from any other. He remains eternally in his being "*in esse essentialiter habito et nullo modo accepto*." Thus God is completely immutable and cannot change from non-being into being. This would be, according to Henry, contrary to his primacy of being, a primacy by which all other beings receive being and movement from him ²¹.

Because creatures do not have their being of existence from themselves, but from another by participation, there is a sense in which all creatures have non-being ²². Certainly there is some dignity that all creatures possess by reason of their proper perfection, but they also have a certain limitation in their being. Because they are different, and in a sense separate, from the divine essence, there is a certain ignobility of all created beings, a certain diminution in the nature and essence in the being of creatures ²³. In his *Summa*, in referring to a passage in Augustine, Henry makes the comment that each creature, because it is from nothing, continuously tends into non-being, insofar as it is *de se* ²⁴. All created beings have a beginning, creation by God,

duratio autem in essendo duo respicit, et terminos essendi quoad initium et finem, et essendi modum quoad fluxum et stabilitatem....Deus est necesse esse, habens esse ex se per essentiam, et non potens omnino non esse....Sciendum igitur quod Deus, ex hoc quod est purum esse...habet in se perfectionem omnis entis....Idcirco absolute concedendum est quod Deus debet dici esse aeternus." Cf. etiam *Ibid.*, 5,42-47: "Nunc autem modus essendi et durandi rei entis per essentiam, quia ipsa est simplex et immutabilis secundum praedeterminata, non potest esse nisi simplex et uniformis sine omni variatione, sicut modus essendi rei entis per participationem, quia ipsa nec omnino simplex est nec omnino immutabilis, non potest esse nisi variabilis et multiformis, ut debet exponi loquendo de creaturis...."

²¹ Cf. *Id.*, *Summa*, art. 30, q. 1 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, I), fol. 178rQ: "...Deus habet esse a se ipso formaliter, quia per suam essentiam, quae de se est necesse esse, effective autem nec ex se, nec ab alio, et sic aeternaliter est stans et manens in esse essentialiter habito et nullo modo accepto, et sic Deus est omnino immutabilis transmutatione a non esse in esse, immo hoc summe contrarium est rationi primitatis in ipso qua primum ens est, et movens stans esse et motum omnibus aliis."

²² Cf. *supra*, note 14. Cf. etiam Henr. de Gand., *Quodl. I*, q. 7 et 8 ed. R. Macken (Leuven-Leiden, 1979) 36,19-(37,) 54.

²³ Cf. Henr. de Gand., *Summa*, art. 32, q. 2 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 43,7-12: "...esse creaturae cuiuscumque aliquid dignitatis in se habet ratione perfectionis propriae, quia tamen, ut propria est et in gradu creaturae existit, limitationem habet, et sic aliquid indignitatis et ignobilitatis habet ex natura suae essentiae, ratione qua creatura est diversa et divisa ab essentia divina, et per hoc est quid diminutum in natura et essentia sua, quod appellatur esse creaturae proprium..."

²⁴ In referring to Augustine, Henry writes (Henr. de Gand., *Summa*, art. 31, q. 1 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 6,70-75): "...dicit creaturam spiritualem moveri per tempus, eo quod durationem omnimode fixam et permanentem non habet in suo esse, sed quodam modo

and all, on their own, tend to non-being, unless God actively intervenes and preserves them in being. Those created beings that are not preserved in being and as a matter of fact do cease are measured by time. On the other hand, those created beings that are conserved and as a matter of fact do not cease, even though it is *possible* for them to cease, are measured by eviternity. Henry, maintaining, in contrast to Thomas, that creation and conservation in existence are two different acts of God, formulated the distinction between eviternity and time upon the activity of God conserving or not conserving the existence of created beings.

Creatures, then, have being by participation, not from themselves, but from another²⁵. Because they have being by participation, they are composed in varying degrees and orders²⁶. There are different hierarchies by which created beings can be ranked according to their approximation to the being of God. Thus, the life of the blessed is said to be incommutable and eternal insofar as those having the divine vision lack both variation and termination. Of course, eternity by essence is superior to this eternity by participation²⁷.

There are then three types of beings, according to Henry of Ghent. First there is uncreated of being which neither begins nor ends. Its being is entirely immutable both in substance and in operation. Second, there is a certain other kind of being, the being of created immaterial substances,

variabilem et succedentem, eo quod quaelibet creatura, quantum est de se, continue tendit in non esse, quia de nihilo est, ut declarari debet loquendo de creaturis,— quae quidem duratio tempus appellatur.”

²⁵ Cf. Henr. de Gand., *Quodl. I*, q. 7 et 8 ed. R. Macken (Leuven-Leiden, 1979) 32,31-34: “Ut autem magis descendamus ad propositum, sciendum quod communis omnium tam philosophorum quam fidelium erat opinio, creaturam in quantum creatura est, non habere esse nisi participatum, et ideo non a se sed ab alio, quod est ipsum esse suum per essentiam.”

²⁶ Cf. Id., *Quodl. XI*, q. 11 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, II) fol. 466rP: “...esse quod convenit essentiae creaturae, est esse participatione quadam, quod per quadam compositionem habet esse in essentia creaturae in quantum est essentia simpliciter...”

²⁷ Cf. Id., *Summa*, art. 31, q. 2 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 10,66-75 et 11,1-3: “...esse...verissime convenit Deo et quasi soli Deo, per participationem tamen quadam omnibus creaturis convenit, secundum gradum tamen et ordinem et secundum plus et minus, secundum quod plus et minus appropinquant ad esse Dei, sic illa quae sunt Deo propinquissima, etiam per quadam attributionem conveniunt quibusdam creaturis, et hoc ei magis approximatis, licet non omnibus, et illis secundum plus et minus in quantum ei magis approximantur, ut sunt incommutabilitas et aeternitas. Et sic vita beatorum dicitur vita incommutabilis et aeterna, in quantum scilicet divinae visioni inhaerentes carent terminatione finis et successione variationis....Aeternitas enim per essentiam est supra aeternitatem participatam, quia est causa ei, ut dicit Commentator super illam secundam propositionem De Causis....”

which is immutable by virtue of its contemplation of the divine being. Even though this being begins to be, — it is created being, — and could cease to be, it is conserved in being and does not, as a matter of fact, cease to be. Third, there is created being which both begins and ceases both in substance and operation, whose being is that of generation and corruption. To these types of being correspond three different measures of duration: eternity, eviternity and time.

Eternity is a kind of duration without variation and variability²⁸. Because of the radical immutability of the being, this duration is necessarily *tota simul*. Because of the impotency to change, this being remains fixed *ex se*, immutably and indivisibly. This being has neither parts that succede each other nor parts that exist together simultaneously. Because there are no parts, one after the other, no succession, no beginning and no end, the duration that characterizes this being is eternity²⁹. Eternity is, according to Henry, the duration in being of eternal things³⁰. It is a disposition which describes the way of duration of a being in permanence and in fixation without any possibility of change³¹. This definition of eternity completely excludes the

²⁸ Cf. Id., *Quodl. IX*, q. 7, ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1984) 151,52-54: "Est enim quaedam duratio absque omni variatione et variabilitate, et est solius Dei, quae dicitur aeternitas et differt sola ratione ab esse et essentia Dei."

²⁹ Cf. Id., *Quodl. V*, q. 13 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, I) fol. 171vC: "Mensura quantitatis essendi sive mora in essendo primo modo aeternitas dicitur quae propter esse omnimodam immutabilitatem necessario est tota simul, quia nihil restat acquirendum sicut nec in esse sic nec in eius mora sive aeternitate. Propter vero impotentiam ad mutationem est ex se stans fixa in eodem, propter quod tota aeternitas non est nisi nunc stans ex se immutabiliter et indivisibiliter, partes non habens, nec simul existentes, nec sibi succedentes, et quantum est ex se et ratione sui mensurati nullam habet rationem continui, sed solum quantum ad considerationem nostri intellectus in respectu et comparatione ad temporis successionem protendentis ipsum per esse praeteritum esse praesens et esse futurum." Cf. etiam *supra*, note 11.

³⁰ Henry does describe eternity as a type of duration. Cf. *supra*, note 20. Thomas, although he usually refers to eternity as a measure, did also on occasion refer to eternity as a type of duration: "Sciendum est igitur, quod tria praedicta nomina [scilicet aeternitas, aevum et tempus] significant durationem quandam." (*In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 2, a. 1 ed. Mandonnet, 466).

³¹ Cf. Henr. de Gand., *Summa*, art. 31, q. 1 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 5,54-(6,) 60: "...consimiliter et rei omnino permanenti et intransmutabili secundum substantiam et dispositiones substantiae, cuiusmodi est Deus, debet attribui dispositio mensurae quae modum durationis sibi respondentis importet, cuiusmodi est aeternitas. Aeternitas enim nihil aliud est nisi dispositio quae dicit modum durationis essendi in permanentia et fixatione in re fixa et permanenti absque omni transmutatione existens...."

defectability characteristic of the duration of created beings and it includes the perfection characteristic of the duration of God's eternal being³².

There is a second kind of being, that of a separated substance, which is by a certain immutability fixed in substance and in operation, such that neither it nor anything in it would ever be lessened or changed³³. From the point of view of this stability, this type of being resembles the being of God. However, this being does begin to exist and it can cease to exist. This coming into existence and this need to be preserved in existence distinguishes this type of being from the utter simplicity of God. The being of a separated substance remains in being after non-being, which is not the case for God. And it is possible for this being to cease to exist, which is also not the case with God. Furthermore, since separated substances do not remain fixed and immutable in and of themselves, but from another, their being can be distinguished from the being of God. The duration that measures this type of being is eivernity, which is an instance that remains immutable and indivisible. In it there can be no succession of parts one after the other unless this would be by human extrapolation based upon experiences in time³⁴.

³² Cf. Id., *Summa*, art. 31, q. 1 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 9,57-60: "Et sic patet quod definitio aeternitatis excludit omnes rationes defectibilitatis in duratione essendi aliarum rerum et includit perfectam rationem in duratione essendi entis aeterni, quod Deus est. Ut solus Deus propter suam immutabilitatem vere debeat dici aeternus...."

³³ Cf. Id., *Quodl. IX*, q. 7 ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1984) 151,59-69: "Est vero quaedam alia quae est variabilis secundum contradictorias dispositiones tantum. Et est dupliciter. Quaedam transiens...Quaedam vero manens, quae est mensura esse rei manentis in esse post non esse, in quantum manens, possibilis tamen cadere in non esse, quod est simpliciter mensura fixa et stans absque innovatione et successione, sicut et esse cuius est, ratione cuius est mensura substantiae cui convenit esse." Cf. Id., *Summa*, art. 31, q. 2 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 15,77-88: "Est autem quoddam aliud esse quod, etsi forte in immutabilitate solidetur alterius munere et in substantia rei et in eiusmodi operatione, ut nec ipsum nec aliquid in se umquam deficiat aut varietur, sed semper fixum stet et eodem modo perserveret, inceptit tamen esse et deficere potest ab esse, vel ab aliquo quod in ipso est, et hoc ex defectibilitate propriae naturae; cuiusmodi est esse substantiarum separatarum, quarum duratio sive quantitas durationis in essendo propter earum immutabilitatem in divina contemplatione...fixa est et stans et eodem modo perseverans, licet quandoque incepta et potens deficere; et appellatur aevum."

³⁴ Cf. Id., *Quodl. V*, q. 13 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, I) fol. 171vD-172rD: "Mensura quantitatis essendi sive mora in essendo secundo modo, aevum dicitur, quae propter actualem immutabilitatem necessario est tota simul, quia nihil restat in esse aeviterni accipiendum. Propter vero potentiam ad mutabilitatem in aeviterno...non est ex se stans fixa, sed ab alio solum, non quia possit fluere in continuum habens ex se partes, sicut potest nunc temporis, sed quia cadere potest, et necessitatem cadendi habet in non esse nisi ab alio in esse conservetur....Propter quod totum aevum aeviterni non est nisi nunc stans immutabiliter ab alio et indivisibiliter, partes non habens neque potens habere omnino

There is a certain variation according to contrary dispositions and the measure of this variation is time. It is the measure of change insofar as there is change according to contrary dispositions in beings. Time then is not the measure by which one can properly measure the being of separate intelligences, e.g. the blessed, because this type of being is not susceptible to change by contrary dispositions, according to Henry³⁵. Time is a measure of an actual change in a temporal thing, that is in a thing which is always in flux, never standing still, having parts continuously following parts and never remaining the same. From this point of view, time can be contrasted with both eternity and eviternity³⁶. In his *Summa* Henry writes that time is nothing other than the disposition of the measure which is said to be the mode of duration of being in transition and succession existing in mobile and changing things differently in prior and later states³⁷.

There are then three measures of duration in the philosophy of Henry of Ghent. Eternity is a measure of the duration of God in his simplicity and perfectibility. Eviternity is the measure of created being in which there is a way of existing simultaneously, but with the defectability that this simultaneity is from another and this existence could cease. Time is a measure of motion of those created beings in flux and change. These three measures of duration reflect three different modes of being which can be distinguished by the five above-mentioned characteristics: 1) the relation of *esse es-*

sicut nec aeternitas, nisi per intellectus protensionem in respectu et comparatione ad partes temporis....” Cf. *Id.*, *Quodl. XI*, q. 11 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, II) fol. 465vM: “Aevum enim est mensura aeviterni quoad modum existendi in simultate quadam defectibili; quemadmodum aeternitas est mensura Dei quoad modum existendi in simultate quadam indefectibili. Et tempus est mensura motus quoad modum existendi in quadam successione.” Cf. etiam *supra*, note 11.

³⁵ Cf. *Id.*, *Quodl. IX*, q. 7, ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1984) p. 151,55-58: “Quaedam vero est variabilis secundum contrarias dispositiones et dicitur tempus, quae est per se mensura motus et non alterius, in quantum mutabile est secundum contrarias dispositiones in esse; de cuius natura non est aevum.”

³⁶ Cf. *Id.*, *Quodl. V*, q. 13 ed. Badius (Paris, 1518, I) fol. 172rD: “Mensura vero quantitatis essendi sive mora in essendo tertio modo, dicitur tempus quod propter actualem mutationem rei temporalis, cuius tempus est per se mensura, non est totum simul sed succedens, quia in esse rei temporalis proprie, cuiusmodi est motus, semper restat aliquid accipiendum, et propter potentiam semper admixtam suo actui, semper est fluens, numquam fixum stans, habens partes continue sibi succedentes, et numquam manentes. In quo communi differentia differunt aeternitas et aevum a tempore...”

³⁷ Cf. *Id.*, *Summa*, art. 31, q. 1 ed. Macken (Leuven, 1991) 5,50-52: “...tempus enim nihil aliud est nisi dispositio mensurae, quae dicit modum durationis existendi in transitu et successione, distinctae secundum prius et posterius, in re mobili et transmutabili existens...”

sentiae and *esse existentiae*; 2) the simplicity and necessity of God; 3) the immutability of God; 4) the non-being of creatures; and 5) the participatory nature of created beings. In Henry's ontology, there is a distinction between *esse* and *ens*, which enables him to assert "God is not properly called *ens* but *esse*; the essence of a creature on the other hand is not properly called *esse*, but *ens*...." ³⁸ In the philosophy of Henry of Ghent, created beings, in contrast to the being of God, tend on their own to non-being. Those created beings that do fall into non-being are measured by time; those created beings that as a matter of fact do not cease to exist but are conserved in being by God are measured by eviternity. This inclination to non-being, absent from the metaphysics of Thomas, is a defining characteristic of created being in the ontology of Henry, and God's ultimate intervention or lack of intervention in this process toward non-being is the basis for Henry's distinction between eviternity and time.

³⁸ Cf. Id., *Quodl. XI*, q. 11 ed. Badius (Paris, 1520, II) fol. 466rO: "...Deus non proprie dicitur ens sed esse, creaturae vero essentia e converso non proprie dicitur esse, sed ens, quod includit esse".