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Attending to Presence: A Study of John
Duns Scotus' Account of Sense Cognition

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ATTENDING TO PRESENCE: A STUDY OF JOHN DUNS SCOTUS'
ACCOUNT OF SENSE COGNITION

by

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ABSTRACT
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This project is guided and motivated by the question concerning the nature of the phantasm as that which mediates between sensation and intellection in John Duns Scotus' account of cognition. Scotus embraces Aristotle's claim that the intellect cannot think without the phantasm. The phantasm is in a corporeal organ, yet the immaterial intellect must act with it to produce an intelligible species. In this project I examine the critical elements of Scotus' cognitive theory in order to understand the nature of the phantasm.

In the first chapter I discuss key elements of Aristotle's metaphysics and give a close, textual reading of *De Anima* guided by his claim that the relationship of the body and soul is highly specific. I then focus on his claim in *De Anima* 2.12 that sensation involves the reception of the sensible form without the matter.

In the second chapter, I discuss Scotus' key theological notions that guide and inform his cognitive project. The beatific vision requires the presence of the divine essence in its own existence to the intellect. As the highest cognitive experience, the beatific vision is definitive of all cognitive experience making the presence of the object to the cognitive faculty of central importance. The discussion of the incarnation shows that the world is sacralized and thus, is a worthy object of cognitive attention in itself.

In the third chapter, I discuss Scotus' understanding of the body-soul relationship focusing on his notion of person to both secure the unity of the human being and to ground the mediation between sensation and intellection.

In the fourth chapter, I first discuss Aquinas' claim that sensation requires a spiritual change. While Scotus' account is in many respects the same as Aquinas', Scotus does not maintain that sensation is primarily passive and is thus, able to account for cognitive attention by way of his understanding of the unity of the sense organ, immanent actions, and sensation as intuitive cognition. What emerges in this discussion is Scotus' particular understanding of an *intentio* by which the nature of the phantasm can be understood.

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Introduction

John Duns Scotus' theory of cognition is an original confluence of elements taken directly or in a modified way from a variety of traditions including the Greek commentary tradition of Aristotle, the Augustinian illumination tradition rooted in Platonism, the Arabic Neoplatonic reading of Aristotle by Avicenna and Averroes, and the Christian theological tradition.¹ The Aristotelian theory, filtered through these various traditions, provides the fundamental framework of Scotus' cognitive theory, accounting for its basic structure and elements. The study of cognition, both sensitive and intellective, that Aristotle presents in *De Anima*, however, is not completely worked out, and while there has been some consensus on the meaning of particular passages in Aristotle over the centuries, Aristotle's intent still remains unclear.²

Aristotle's ideas had been the subject of many commentaries and had thus undergone various interpretations by the time they reached Scotus in the late 13th and early 14th centuries in an historical context vastly different from the one in which Aristotle himself wrote. Scotus is then not only dealing with the perceived intrinsic inadequacies of Aristotle's theory and its various interpretations, but also the concerns

¹ For the Arabic influences see, for example, Etienne Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de depart de Duns Scot," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen-age*, Paris 2 (1926-1927): 89-149; (Arabic, Neoplatonic and Christian) Mary Elizabeth Ingham, "John Duns Scotus: An Integrated Vision," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan Osborne (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 191-2; (Avicenna) Joseph Owens "Common Nature: A Point of Comparison Between Thomistic and Scotistic *Metaphysics*," *Medieval Studies* (1957): 1-14. For a discussion of the Augustinian influences see in particular, E. Bettoni, *Duns Scotus: The Basic Principles of His Philosophy*, trans. B. Bonansea (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1961), 20-21; Etienne Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1952), 10; Jerome V. Brown, "John Duns Scotus on Henry of Ghent's Arguments for Divine Illumination: The Statement of the Case," *Vivarium* xiv, 2 (1976): 94-113; D.E. Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the 13th Century* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), 279-370. It is clear that Scotus rejects the illumination of Augustine while embracing other aspects of Augustine's theory. These latter aspects will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

² Zdzislaw Kuksewicz, "The Potential and the Agent Intellect," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 595.

and questions of his own day as found in his responses to his most influential contemporaries including, but not limited to, Henry of Ghent, Peter Olivi, and Godfrey of Fontaines.³ These concerns included the question of whether or not the Aristotelian framework could account for the various cognitive activities and thus offer a cohesive cognitive theory. Scotus' theory of cognition is indebted to these rich and varied traditions as well as to his contemporaries as they provide the context of his own thought and in many ways the content such that he incorporates many of their elements.⁴ Still, this debt neither renders Scotus' cognitive theory wholly unoriginal nor his thought unworthy of study in itself. Scotus' own thought, more often than not, manifests itself as a compromise between various competing claims. His theory of cognition is one of complex mediation, not the result of mere reaction to the positions of others, but the product of a careful, deliberate, and sustained consideration of the issues, guided by his own insights and motivations. Scotus places a new emphasis on certain aspects of the cognitive process, and thus, I will argue, lays the ground for a new approach to the questions of how we know and what we know.

Scotus' own approach to cognition is framed by and constantly attentive to the status of the wayfarer, the human being *pro statu isto*, in this life. But though the status of the pilgrim certainly imposes limits upon the cognitive ability in this life, these limits are but temporary and do not intrinsically change the nature of the human intellect, its natural activity, or its adequate and proper object, and Scotus always treats them as such.⁵

³ Katherine Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham: Optics, Epistemology and the Foundations of Semantics, 1250-1345* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 56.

⁴ Tachau 1988, 56; see also Robert Pasnau, "Cognition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 285-286.

⁵ Pasnau 2003, 294-95; Allan Wolter, "Duns Scotus on the Natural Desire for the Supernatural," *New Scholasticism* 23 (1940): 281-317.

His interests in cognition are steered beyond the limits of this life by his understanding of the natural ability of the intellect, which is determined and defined by the object that ultimately perfects the intellect in the next life, the beatific object. His understanding of the beatific object informs the whole of his cognitive project, deepening his understanding of certain elements in Aristotle's framework and allowing him to address unresolved issues in Aristotle's account of cognition.

The question that motivates and guides this dissertation is the particular question of the nature of the phantasm. The phantasm is that sense image that somehow mediates between sensation and intellection. The agent intellect acts with the phantasm to provide an object to the intellect. Given, however, that the intellect is immaterial and inorganic, the question arises as to how it is able to act with the phantasm which is in a bodily organ and under the material condition of singularity.

Aristotle claims that the intellect cannot think without a sense image, and therefore, though not dependent on the body for its own operations, is dependent upon the body-soul composite to provide such a sense image. While Aristotle does give a somewhat detailed explanation of how he understands sensation, he does not give a detailed explanation of how the intellect acts with the sense image nor does he work out the problem of how the intellect relates to the body-soul composite.

Scotus embraces Aristotle's claim that the intellect cannot think without a sense image. Given his Christian beliefs, Scotus understands that the intellectual part of the soul is able to exist separately from the body, and yet, in this life, is dependent upon the body. Whereas the sense has an external object, the intellect requires an internal object. The intellect, in this life, has no direct access to the external object and therefore depends

upon sensation, both external and internal, to provide a sense image or phantasm that the agent intellect is able to act with in order to make an object present to the intellect. What is the nature of the phantasm that allows it to be present to the agent intellect?

This is a complicated and involved question. In order to be in a position to offer an answer, several other issues must be addressed and explained, for example how is sensation to be understood as a process of the body-soul composite that is ultimately able to produce a phantasm, and how is the relationship of the soul and body to be understood such that there can be a real mediation between the distinct faculties of sensation and intellection? In this dissertation I will address these questions in the following way.

In Chapter 1 I will discuss the basic elements of Aristotle's metaphysics and account of cognition. In this chapter I will first discuss key metaphysical notions. I will then offer a detailed reading of *De Anima* in which I will emphasize the concerns that I see are critical to Aristotle: the highly specific relationship between the soul and the body, his concern to detail the characteristics of a body that can be ensouled, his homonymy principle and understanding of ensouled being, and his understanding of sensation as the reception of sensible form without matter.

In Chapter 2 I will discuss how two theological notions, the beatific vision and the incarnation, both inform and guide Scotus' cognitive process. The beatific vision requires the presence of the divine essence in its own existence to the cognizer. Thus, the intellect of the cognizer must be intrinsically capable of attending to the presence of an extramental object existing in itself. Given that Scotus claims that the proper object of the intellect is being, the cognitive faculties, both sense and intellect, are intrinsically capable of noticing the existence of their objects. The notion of the presence of the

object is critical to Scotus' account of cognition. In the discussion of the incarnation I will endeavor to show that the world and the object are worthy of being loved and are therefore worthy of cognitive attention in themselves.

In Chapter 3 I will discuss how Scotus understands the relationship of the soul and the body. In the course of this discussion I will address how Scotus understands unity, the nature of the accident, the nature of a suppositum, and the nature of the immateriality of the intellect. What I will show is that, for Scotus, the notion of person, allows him to guarantee the unity of the body-soul composite such that the mediation between sensation and intellection can be assured.

In Chapter 4 I turn my attention to the process of sensation. In the first part of the chapter I discuss in detail Aquinas' distinction between natural and spiritual action in terms of his discussion on sensation. I also consider the debate in the current literature as a way of accessing the complexities of the issues in Aquinas' account. Four questions emerge from my discussion of Aquinas that serves as my organizational guide in discussing Scotus' account of sensation. In my discussion I will show how Scotus answers these questions and then discuss the way he comes to understand sensation in his mature work, the *Quodlibetal Questions*. This allows me to consider the nature of the sensible species as an *intentio*, and thus, the nature of the phantasm.

The main text of Scotus that I use in this dissertation is his *Quodlibetal Questions*, though I also use his *Commentary on De Anima*, *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, and the *Ordinatio*. The *Quodlibetal Questions* is one of Scotus' most mature works. The *Quodlibetal Questions* proves interesting as a text. Though the questions were not of his own choosing, as Felix Alluntis and Allan Wolter point out in the

introduction to their translation of the *Quodlibetal Questions, God and Creatures*, upon revising these questions for publication, Scotus “wove in so much of his basic philosophy and theology as to make this work one of his mainstays.”⁶ I not only found this to be the case in my own study, but was further intrigued with the *Quodlibetal Questions* as a text. Scotus arranges the questions in such a way as to create an extended argument that serves to reveal the cohesiveness and depth of his own thought. Thus, when working with passages from the *Quodlibetal Questions*, I found it helpful to consider several side by side or to offer a close textual reading of an extended argument in order to follow the path of his thought.

⁶ Felix Alluntis and Allan Wolter. *God and Creatures*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1975, xviii.

Chapter 1 Aristotle's theory of cognition

The concern of this first chapter is to present the fundamental Aristotelian structure which frames Scotus' thought so that his particular concerns and eventual solutions as a medieval Christian thinker can emerge and take shape in the chapters that follow. My aim in this first chapter is to give an account of the central elements of Aristotle's thought and along the way draw attention to issues critical to the medieval thinker. In the first part of this chapter, 1.1, I discuss the key metaphysical principles of Aristotle's system that guide and frame his approach to questions on the soul and cognition. In the second part of this chapter, 1.2, I discuss key elements of Aristotle's discussion on the soul and its cognitive activities as found in *De Anima*.⁷ I conclude the chapter with a brief critical summary.

1.1 Some Underlying Metaphysical Principles

Aristotle is a systematic philosopher such that every question, concern, or problem is addressed within a carefully reasoned framework. The study of metaphysics for Aristotle is a study of the underlying principles of this framework and indeed is a study that only comes about through rigorous and abstract thought. To understand the answers that he gives to any question, whether it is a question on the cognitive activities of the human being or otherwise, requires, then, that certain principles of this framework

⁷ For the purposes of this dissertation, which is concerned with Scotus' cognitive theory and how he understood critical passages in Aristotle's *De Anima*, when quoting from *De Anima*, I give the Latin translation of the pertinent text. I use the Latin translation of *De Anima* as found in Averroes' Commentary of *De Anima: Averrois Cordubensis Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De Anima libros* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953). For the English translation I use: Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. J.A. Smith in *The Revised Oxford Translation of The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathon Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

be present in the mind of his reader. To that end, I discuss Aristotle's notions of substance, matter (potentiality), form (actuality), and the hylomorphic (hylo – matter + morphē – form) principle. My aim in this discussion is to briefly outline these notions in as straightforward a way as possible without either oversimplifying or digressing into resolutions of difficulties that lie outside the scope of this work.

Substance. Aristotle's main discussions of substance are found in two different texts, *Categories* and *Metaphysics* (VII-IX). There is still much debate over how Aristotle finally defines substance, what counts as substance, whether the accounts of substance given in these two texts are compatible, and whether Aristotle's theory of substance is ultimately defensible.⁸ My purpose here is simply to discuss Aristotle's notion of substance in a clear and concise way and so, while there does exist much scholarly debate, for my purposes here, I will set aside these debates.

In the *Categories* Aristotle distinguishes ten categories of being. Substance is the first of these categories, while what is predicated of substance makes up the other nine: quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, condition, action, passion.⁹ These terms are meant to be understood as logical as well as ontological. They are grounded in reality such that they indicate either the individual being, substance, or the aspects of being, that which is predicated of substance, i.e., accidents. The first of the categories, substance,

⁸ Christopher Shields, *Aristotle* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 256. See pp. 256-257 for Shields' discussion of the debate that exists between the compatibilists, those scholars who see the accounts of substance found in the *Categories* and the middle books of the *Metaphysics* as compatible, and the incompatibilists who, Shields explains, typically argue that the account given in the *Metaphysics* is more mature and therefore "supplants" the account given in the *Categories*. For Shields' more in depth discussion of the *Categories*, see pp. 146-195 in the same text.

⁹ Aristotle. *Categories*. Trans. J.L. Akrill in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, Volume One, ed. Jonathan Barnes, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984). Aristotle gives different lists of the categories of being in different works, though the above list of ten categories appears both in the *Topics* and the *Categories*. The medieval tradition recognized these 10 categories. For a discussion on the medieval tradition see Chapters 4 and 5 in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 1989.

answers the question what something is, whereas the other nine answer questions about some particular characteristic of this something. According to Michael Frede, there is a general agreement of most scholars that what Aristotle intends by the division of the categories is a “scheme of classification such that all there is, all entities, can be divided into a limited number of ultimate classes.”¹⁰ While it can be said that all that is can be framed and understood by these categories, which Barnes in fact understands as “an inventory of our world – our ontological catalogue,” what these categories actually mean is not an easy matter.¹¹

At the beginning of the *Categories* Aristotle offers a four-fold distinction of things that are: (a) those things that are said of a subject but not in a subject (man is said of the individual man but not in any subject), (b) those things that are in a subject but not said of a subject (not as a part of the subject but nonetheless in the subject such that it cannot exist separately from it examples being individual knowledge of grammar or individual white in a subject), (c) those that are both said of a subject and in a subject (knowledge is both in the soul and said of grammar), and (d) those that are neither said of a subject nor in a subject (the individual horse or man).¹² What emerges from this

¹⁰ Michael Frede, “Categories in Aristotle,” in *Studies in Aristotle*, ed. Dominic J. O’Meara (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 1.

¹¹ Jonathan Barnes, “*Metaphysics*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 79. See also Robin Smith, “Logic,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 55-57. Here Smith argues that understanding the categories is difficult and then examines side by side Aristotle’s discussion in the *Topics* I.9 103b20-25 and *Categories* 4, Ib25-2a4. Smith argues that these passages could be viewed in three ways, first as a list of types of predicates which arises out of reflection upon basic questions of being, second, the categories can be understood as the highest genera, and third, the categories are kinds of predication.

¹² *Categories* 2, 1a20-1b6. For an insightful reading of this particular passage see Sheldon M. Cohen, *Aristotle on Nature and Incomplete Substance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 10-11. Cohen explains that the terms “said of” and “said in (or “present in”)” should be understood as technical terms instructive about the things that are. What Aristotle ultimately does in the opening chapters of the *Categories*, Cohen observes, is to turn Platonism on its head, making primary substance the individual,

fourfold distinction is Aristotle's fundamental distinction between substance and accident which governs the relationship between the first category of being (substance) and the other nine (accidents). Aristotle defines substance (*ousia*) as "that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g., the individual man or the individual horse."¹³ Aristotle further posits that "it is a characteristic common to every substance not to be in a subject,"¹⁴ and that "every substance seems to signify a certain 'this'."¹⁵ By contrast, an accident inheres in a substance and thus exists in a derivative way.¹⁶ Aristotle further divides substance into primary substance and secondary substance. A primary substance is the existing individual whose existence makes possible the existence of all other things.¹⁷ Secondary substances are the species and genera.¹⁸ An existing individual or primary substance belongs to the species, which in turn belongs to the genus. Neither the species nor the genus would exist if it were not for the existing individual. The idea of substance that emerges here is that substance is a subject, that of which something is predicated. Aristotle establishes in the *Categories* that the "highly actual concrete singular thing" is primary substance because it alone has independent existence and thus,

concrete being rather than the forms, and the forms (species, genera) secondary substances and thus, dependent on the individual concrete being.

¹³ *Categories* 5, 2a13-15. See also Cohen 1996, 6-7. Cohen discusses here the difficulties in the use of the English word substance for the Greek word that Aristotle uses, *ousia*. The word substance is problematic because it can mean stuff aligning it more with the way that Aristotle understands matter, or it can mean essence which is clearly not the way that Aristotle is using it in the *Categories*. Cohen offers that at times it might be better to use the word 'thing' in order to attend to the distinction between the individual being and its though still uses the traditional translation of *ousia* as substance. I point this out here in a footnote in order to both address the translation difficulties and to underscore how Aristotle definition of substance here as the individual concrete being.

¹⁴ *Categories* 5, 3a9.

¹⁵ *Categories* 5, 3b10.

¹⁶ Barnes 1995, 77.

¹⁷ *Categories* 5, 2b5-6.

¹⁸ *Categories* 5, 2a15-19.

is logically and ontologically first.¹⁹ In the *Categories*, substance is what is primary, what is “basic and prior to all else.”²⁰ A point that should be made here is that based on this classification scheme not everything that exists is a substance. But the basic distinction between what exists as a substance and what does not is based on the four-fold distinction that Aristotle gives at the beginning of the *Categories*. This four-fold distinction, however, falls short of providing an analysis of substance and its components that accounts for it standing alone and not being said of or said in a subject. It is in the *Metaphysics* that such an analysis is offered.

In the middle books (VII-IX) of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle offers a complex and more highly developed analysis of substance in which he considers whether substance should be understood as form, matter, or the composite of both. What informs his discussion of substance here is the principle of hylomorphism, Aristotle’s doctrine that each thing is a unity of form and matter. I will discuss hylomorphism in more detail later. Nowhere in the *Categories* does Aristotle mention hylomorphism or its components, form and matter.²¹ So the discussion of substance in the *Metaphysics* has a decidedly different approach, and given that in this text Aristotle is not simply offering a classification of being, but a science of being, his discussion of substance engages the question of the intelligibility of being.

At the beginning of *Metaphysics* VII Aristotle claims that there are several senses in which a thing is said to be. Either ‘to be’ means “what a thing is or a ‘this’,” or ‘to be’

¹⁹ Joseph Owens, “Matter and Predication in Aristotle,” in *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed. John R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 36.

²⁰ Shields 2007, 257.

²¹ Shields 2007, 167-170. Shields here discusses the possibility that the categories are derived from hylomorphism, that form is the basis of the category of quality and matter is the basis of the category of quantity. Since form and matter make no appearance in the *Categories*, Shields thinks that this claim is problematic. However, he points out that this is an approach that medieval thinkers took and has the advantage of grounding the categories in the world.

means “that a thing is of a certain quality or quantity or has some such predicate asserted of it.”²² Aristotle qualifies this statement, however, claiming that while there are indeed these several senses of being, that which is, in the primary sense, is the ‘what’ or the substance of the thing.²³ Thus, the meaning of substance here departs from narrowness of the *Categories*. Perhaps to emphasize the greater breadth and depth that he will give to substance in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle then, identifies the question, what being is, with the question, what substance is.²⁴ According to Jonathan Barnes, this is Aristotle’s leading question.²⁵ The question of substance, here, takes on existential and ontological import making it the most fundamental of all questions.²⁶ Barnes contends that in this one question Aristotle implicitly asks three questions: (1) What does it mean to call something a substance, i.e., to call something ontologically primary? (2) What must that which is called a substance be like in order to be ontologically primary? (3) What items actually qualify as substances?²⁷ It is clear that Aristotle is concerned here, among other things, to provide the ground of the distinction between the substance and the accident, between those things that cannot be predicated of something else and those things that are predicated of something else, reaching beyond the discussion in the *Categories*. These three implicit questions that Barnes observes here point to some of the difficulties that Aristotle is addressing. Of these three questions, Barnes claims that it is the second that

²² *Metaphysics* 7.1, 1028a10-13.

²³ *Metaphysics* 7.1, 1028a13-15.

²⁴ *Metaphysics* 7.1, 1028b2-4.

²⁵ Barnes 1995, 90. Barnes also explains here that what Aristotle means, indeed, “his overall metaphysical position,” is far from clear and still open to scholarly debate. Nonetheless, Barnes offers what he calls a “simplistic” interpretation which I will follow in this chapter in order to present the basic elements of Aristotle’s thought.

²⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 7.1, 1028b2-4, trans. W.D. Ross in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, Volume Two, ed. Jonathan Barnes, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984).

²⁷ Barnes 1995, 90.

is most problematic for Aristotle to answer because he seems to be pulled in opposite directions.²⁸

On the one hand, Barnes observes, Aristotle clearly understands a substance as the individual entity he indicates in the *Categories*.²⁹ On the other hand, he wants substance to be intelligible, that is, definable.³⁰ The problem is that only common items, like species or genera, are definable. This raises the question of the intelligibility of the existing individual and hence, of the world.³¹ Barnes sees a tension in Aristotle:

“Substances are individuals: Mozart is a substance, man is not. Substances are definable: man is a substance, Mozart is not.”³² In *Metaphysics V*, Aristotle claims that substance is “the ultimate substratum, which is no longer predicated of anything else,” and at the same time that a substance is “a ‘this’ and separable.”³³ How Aristotle can hold both of these accounts is problematic, but Barnes offers a resolution.

“This so-and-so” is the translation of Aristotle’s *tode ti*. This phrase, *tode ti*, according to Barnes, is Aristotle’s attempt to resolve the tension between the individuality of substance, i.e., that substance indicates the existing individual as seen in the *Categories*, and the need for substance to be definable. The ‘this’ indicates the individual, which for Aristotle, is “one in number” or as Barnes explains, “one item which can be identified and distinguished from other items and re-identified again as the

²⁸ Barnes 1995, 90.

²⁹ Barnes 1995, 90-91.

³⁰ Barnes 1995, 91.

³¹ *Metaphysics*, 7.10, 1036a1-8. This text is concerned with the difficulty of the ontological status of the individual concrete substance and hence its intelligibility. Here Aristotle contends that there is no definition of the individual concrete substance. They are known with the help of thought or perception, but when we are not actually conscious of them, we do not clearly know of their existence. It is only by means of a universal formula that they are cognized.

³² Barnes 1995, 91.

³³ *Metaphysics* 5.8, 1017b23-25. Barnes’ translation of this passage is, “things are called substances in two ways: a substance is whatever is an ultimate subject, which is no longer said of anything else; and a substance is a this so-and-so which is also separable,” 91.

same item.”³⁴ The ‘so-and-so’ indicates the definable, the ‘what’.³⁵ What Aristotle means by “separable” is unclear, but Barnes contends that it should mean that the existence of the substance “can be explained without invoking the existence of anything else.”³⁶ Barnes observes that it is fairly clear that Aristotle understands substance as the individual and as that which indicates what the individual is, the form or essence.

As abovementioned, at the beginning of *Metaphysics* VII, Aristotle claims that there are several senses of being. Aristotle here continues the distinction drawn in the *Categories* between the existing individual and the accidents said of this individual. But he frames the discussion in *Metaphysics* in terms of ontology rather than logic, that is, he asks in what senses can a thing be said to be? The primary sense in which a thing can be said to be is the ‘what’ or the individual substance,³⁷ while every other sense in which a thing is said to be predicates something of substance. Aristotle here affirms what he argues in the *Categories*, namely, that substance is “that which is not predicated of a subject, but of which all else is predicated.”³⁸ However, he observes that there is more than one way in which substance can be understood, namely, either as the essence, the universal, the genus, or the substratum.³⁹ The substratum is “that of which other things are predicated, while it is itself not predicated of anything else.”⁴⁰ Now if substance is understood as the substratum, it is necessary to determine the nature of the substratum. Aristotle considers that it can have the sense of being matter, form, or the union of matter

³⁴ Barnes 1995, 91.

³⁵ Barnes 1995, 91.

³⁶ Barnes 1995, 92.

³⁷ *Metaphysics* 7.1, 1028a 14-15.

³⁸ *Metaphysics* 7.3, 1029a 7-8.

³⁹ *Metaphysics* 7.3, 1028b33-35.

⁴⁰ *Metaphysics* 7.3, 1028b35-37.

and form.⁴¹ Before turning to a discussion of each of these notions, what can be taken from this discussion on substance is that Aristotle uses three criteria to determine what substance is, subject, individual, and separable.⁴²

Matter and Potentiality. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle defines matter as “that which in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity or assigned to any other of the categories by which being is determined.”⁴³ Matter in itself is not a particular thing because, by definition, an individual thing is a composed of both form and matter. Matter simply as matter has no actual existence, and this is due to the fact that it is not formed matter and not being formed matter is without definition or determination. In fact, Aristotle claims that matter is “unknowable in itself.”⁴⁴ This very lack of determinateness is what gives matter the capacity to be formed or determined. As no particular thing and having not particular determination, matter is *dunamis* or potentiality. *Dunamis* means the capacity of doing something or being something, a power, capacity, or a potentiality.⁴⁵ So while matter as pure potentiality has no existence, potentiality itself is the power or capacity of matter to be formed, or to be acted upon, and is thus a necessary condition of the existence of a composite being or substance.⁴⁶

⁴¹ *Metaphysics* 7.3, 1029a7-33.

⁴² Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 131-135. Cohen here acknowledges these three criteria of substantiality as being those widely discussed in the literature. He finds, in addition to these three, six criteria of substantiality: (1) the differentia of the species must be proper, (2) the thing must be one by nature, (3) Its parts must be incapable of separate existence, (4) its movement must be indivisible, (5) it must be naturally continuous, and (6) its parts cannot be full-fledged substances in their own right. These criteria will become helpful when discussing the question of the substantiality of the soul in the section on *De Anima*.

⁴³ *Metaphysics* 7.3, 1029a20-23.

⁴⁴ *Metaphysics* 7.10, 1036a8.

⁴⁵ Barnes 1995, 95; Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 164.

⁴⁶ *Metaphysics* 9.1, 1046a16-21.

Matter as potentiality is the principle of change for Aristotle. All things that change are composed, in part, of matter.⁴⁷ In order to explain how something comes into being or changes, in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says that “everything that changes is something and is changed by something and into something.”⁴⁸ A something is already formed matter, what is generated or comes into being is a this, a composite of form and matter.⁴⁹ Matter only has actual existence as formed, as S. Marc Cohen explains that matter at every level except the lowest is “itself a compound of matter and form, and its essential properties will be those of its form.”⁵⁰ As formed matter a thing is actually a specific something, and as this specific something, it has the capacity to be changed into a specific something else because it is composed of matter determined in a certain way. Aristotle says that when we look for the material cause of the human being, for example, we must look to the proximate material cause. Rather than looking to the elements as material cause, we need to look to the “matter peculiar to the thing.”⁵¹ This is because in order for something to be changed into something else, it must already be that something else, potentially. Thus, only matter that is already determined in some way has the capacity to be or become a particular thing. For example, only certain kinds of matter have the capacity to become a saw; a saw cannot be made out of wool.⁵² Wool can never actually be a saw because in some sense, prior to being a saw, it would have to potentially be a saw. But wool lacks such characteristics that would give it the capacity to be a saw. Steel is able to be an axe because it has the capacity to have a sharp edge.

⁴⁷ *Metaphysics* 8.5, 1044b26-28.

⁴⁸ *Metaphysics* 12.3, 1069b36-1070a1.

⁴⁹ *Metaphysics*, 8.3, 1043b18-19. See also *Metaphysics* 7.11, 1037a1-2.

⁵⁰ S. Marc Cohen, “Hylomorphism and Functionalism,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 71.

⁵¹ *Metaphysics* 8.4, 1044a33-1044b2.

⁵² *Metaphysics* 8.4, 1044a26-30.

Steel is potentially an axe. Potentiality as a power or a capacity is essentially what it is capable of being, but this essential capacity comes not from matter, but from form.

Form and Actuality. Form is that which determines and identifies a being as what it is. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle identifies the form with essence: “By form I mean the essence of each thing and its primary substance.”⁵³ Essence is the word used to translate Aristotle’s *to ti ên einai*, which literally means “the what it was to be” for a thing. Essence is “what something is.”⁵⁴ In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle claims that the definition seems to be the “what it is” (*to ti esti*).⁵⁵ But in the *Posterior Analytics*, Sheldon M. Cohen explains, Aristotle is not concerned with the “what it is” question in terms of substances, as is clearly the case in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle contends that “definition and essence in the primary and simple sense belong to substances.”⁵⁶ In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle is concerned to show what substance is primarily, and what appears to win out is that substance is primarily form which is essence.⁵⁷ Thus, the substance of the *Categories* is definable since, in being a composite of both form and matter, it has definition and determining characteristics. Form determines and defines matter and is therefore prior to matter. Form is actuality (*entelecheia* or *energeia*), matter is potentiality (*dunamis*). The *entelecheia* or *energeia* can be understood as the exercise of a capacity or the actualization of a potential such that, as Sheldon M. Cohen explains, every “actualization or realization (*energeia*) of a *dunamis* is the completion

⁵³ *Metaphysics* 7.7, 1032b1-2.

⁵⁴ *Metaphysics* 7.4, 1030a3.

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 2, 90b4, trans. Jonathan Barnes, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, Volume One, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁵⁶ Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 15; *Metaphysics* 7.4, 1030b4-5.

⁵⁷ Shields 2007, 256-257.

(*entelecheia*) of that *dunamis*.”⁵⁸ Since matter is nothing in itself, unknowable in itself, form as actuality, realizes the potentiality of matter. Thus, it is unity of formed matter that has actual existence, not essentially, but such that existence follows from the form as actuality.⁵⁹

Hylomorphic union. Each individual being or substance is a composite, a unity of matter and form, a unity of potentiality and actuality.⁶⁰ Matter as potentiality is capable of receiving the form which as actuality is only realized in matter. Barnes explains that Aristotle originally understood matter as stuff and form as shape, his standard example being the bronze sphere.⁶¹ The bronze is the stuff and the sphere is the shape. Stuff is indefinable in itself for it lacks the structure or determinateness that shape gives to it. In the *Physics*, Aristotle explains that every sensible substance is composed of two principles, matter and form.⁶² Joseph Owens uses an analogy to explain how the matter that is unknowable (potentiality) becomes knowable (actuality). As bronze is to the statue, matter is the “underlying nature in any sensible substance to its corresponding form.”⁶³ Matter as the underlying nature in any sensible substance is in itself completely indeterminate. In contrast, the form is the “fundamental knowable content” of the sensible thing.⁶⁴ The form actuates the matter and thus constitutes the particular thing.⁶⁵

The result of the union of form and matter is the particular thing which is at once

⁵⁸ Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 164. See also, Barnes 1995, 94-95.

⁵⁹ *Metaphysics* 4.2, 1003b30-33.

⁶⁰ Barnes 1995, 97.

⁶¹ Barnes 1995, 97.

⁶² Aristotle, *Physics*, 1.7, 190b17-28, trans. R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, Volume One, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁶³ Joseph Owens, “The Grounds of Universality in Aristotle,” in *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed. John R. Catan, 1981), 48-58, 52.

⁶⁴ Owens 1981, 53.

⁶⁵ Owens 1981, 53.

individual and knowable. That each particular thing is a union of form and matter is Aristotle's hylomorphic principle. At the core of this principle is the claim that matter and form are one and the same thing. In any given hylomorphic union, the matter is essentially what the form is actually, and therefore are somehow one.⁶⁶

S. Marc Cohen observes that while Aristotle typically uses the artifact model of the bronze sphere or bronze statue to illustrate the hylomorphic union, it has its advantages and disadvantages. In such a model, form can be easily understood as either the shape of the material or in more complex cases the functional organization.⁶⁷ S. Marc Cohen explains, however, that a major disadvantage of the artifact model, to Aristotle's own theory, is that it characterizes the connection of form and matter as contingent and thus oversimplifies the hylomorphic union.⁶⁸ In all but the simplest of cases, the artifact model is unable to appreciate the complex unity of the form and matter relationship. In highly complex cases, for example, living being, it is only highly formed matter that has the capacity to receive a form, a soul, that has complicated material requirements. The more complex a being, the less contingent the relationship between form and matter appears to be. In *De Anima*, Aristotle considers the case of living beings, devoting much time to understanding the characteristics of a body that can be ensouled.

1.2 *De Anima*

From the outset of his study of the soul in *De Anima* where he claims that the soul is the principle of animal life, Aristotle concerns himself with the difficulties of his task.

⁶⁶ *Metaphysics* 8.6 1045b18-21.

⁶⁷ S. Marc Cohen 1992, 58.

⁶⁸ S. Marc Cohen 1992, 58.

Aristotle's stated aim is to understand first, the soul's essential nature, i.e., the nature of the soul's substantiality, and second, the soul's properties or affections including those properties had by the soul itself and those had by the composite of the body and soul.⁶⁹ What complicates the study of the soul, the principle of animal life, is its relation to the body. Early in Book I Aristotle observes that most of the affections or movements of the soul involve the body.⁷⁰ The only possible exception is thinking unless it be shown that thinking is impossible without the bodily imagination.⁷¹ Aristotle understands the soul's affections as enmattered accounts (*logoi*), meaning that with most of the affections of the soul there is a concurrent affection of the body.⁷² An enmattered account involves both psychic conditions and material conditions, or as Amelie Rorty characterizes it, cognition and the body.⁷³ Aristotle offers the example of anger as such an enmattered account: "anger should be defined as a certain mode of movement of such and such a body (or part or faculty of a body) by this or that cause and for this or that end."⁷⁴

Aristotle considers whether the affections of the soul should be studied by the physicist (*physikos*) or the dialectician (*dialektikos*); the physicist specifies the material conditions, the dialectician specifies the account or form.⁷⁵ But Aristotle contends that simply supplying the material conditions and the form is not enough, a proper definition

⁶⁹ *De Anima* 402a7-9: "Et quesitum est scire naturam et substantiam eius; postea autem omnia que accidunt ei. Et existimatum est quod horum accidentium quedam sunt passiones proprie anime, et quedam accidunt corpori propter animam."

⁷⁰ *De Anima* 403a5-7: "Et nos videmus quod plures earum impossibile est ut sint neque actio neque passio extra corpus, v.g., iracundia et desiderium, et audacia, et universaliter sentire."

⁷¹ *De Anima* 403a8-10: "Quod autem videtur proprium ei est intelligere. Sed si hoc etiam est ymaginatio, aut non potest esse sine ymaginatione, impossibile est ut sit neque hoc etiam extra corpus."

⁷² *De Anima* 403a16-18: "Et videtur etiam quod omnes passiones anime sunt in corpore, ut iracundia, et gratia, et timor, et pietas, et auda." See also *De Anima* 403a25: "Unde manifestum est quod passiones anime sunt intentiones in materia."

⁷³ Amelie Rorty, "B. *De Anima*: Its Agenda and Its Recent Interpreters," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 8.

⁷⁴ *De Anima* 403a 26-28: "Quapropter diffinitiones debent esse ita: quoniam ira est motus alicuius parties istius corporis, aut alicuius virtutis eius, a tali, et propter tale."

⁷⁵ *De Anima* 403b1-2: "Naturalis igitur dat materiam, Sermocinalis autem dat formam et intentionem."

of the affections of the soul must also include a teleological account, i.e., it must specify the purpose or end.⁷⁶ In other words, as Rorty points out, in order to understand the relationship between the material conditions and the account or form, we must know the “end designated in its logos.”⁷⁷ Given the nature of the affections of the soul as enmattered accounts, a study of them requires more than either the physicist or the dialectician alone can give. Rorty aptly characterizes Aristotle’s study of the soul as a philosophical bio-psychology acknowledging that it is broader than contemporary philosophy of mind or contemporary philosophical psychology.⁷⁸ In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle considers whether matter should be part of the definition of substance.⁷⁹ In the *De Anima*, in striving to give an account of living being and its activities, Aristotle refines his hylomorphic doctrine in order to expand and deepen how he understands the relationship of form and matter, actuality and potentiality. From the beginning of *De Anima*, Aristotle alerts his readers to the intimate relationship between the soul and the body.

In the rest of the first book of *De Anima*, Aristotle analyzes his predecessors’ notions of the soul observing two traditional characteristics used to distinguish the animate from the inanimate: movement and sensation.⁸⁰ As Aristotle has identified (most of) the affections of the soul as enmattered accounts, that he begins his discussion of previous theories of the soul with movement and sensation is important. Any account of

⁷⁶ *De Anima* 403b7-8: “. . . alius vero dat formam existentem in hoc propter ista.”

⁷⁷ Rorty 1992, 8..

⁷⁸ Rorty 1992, 7.

⁷⁹ *Metaphysics* 7.10-7.11. At 1037a25-29, Aristotle clearly claims that the material parts will not be present in the formula of a substance for they are only parts of the concrete substance. At 1036a1-8, Aristotle claims that the concrete thing has no definition. The concrete thing is known by its universal formula, but since matter in itself is unknowable, what is known is simply the form or essence.

⁸⁰ *De Anima* 403b24-26: “Et hoc ponemus principium, dicendo quod habens animam videtur differre a non animato his duobus proprie, scilicet motu et sensu.”

movement or sensation will have to be grounded in the relationship of the soul to the body. It is from this point of view that Aristotle examines his predecessors' ideas and admonishes them:

The view we have just been examining, in company with most theories about the soul, involves the following absurdity: they all join the soul to a body, or place it in a body, without adding any specification of the reason of their union, or of the bodily conditions required for it. Yet, such explanation can scarcely be omitted; for some community of nature is presupposed by the fact that the one acts and the other is acted upon, the one moves and the other is moved; but it is not the case that *any* two things are related to one another in these ways. All, however, that these thinkers do is to describe the specific characteristics of the soul; they do not try to determine anything about the body which is to contain it, as if it were possible, as in the Pythagorean myths, that any soul could be clothed by any body—an absurd view, for each body seems to have a form and shape of its own. It is as absurd as to say that the art of carpentry could embody itself in flutes; each art must use its tools, each soul its body.⁸¹

In this passage Aristotle clearly finds fault with those who do not specify either the reason that the soul is joined to the body or the bodily requirements for such a union. He reasons that given the fact that “one acts and the other is acted upon,” the relationship of the soul to the body is a special case. In fact, he finds the view that a study of the soul that only focuses on the soul's characteristics and not those of the body is absurd because: “each body seems to have a form and shape of its own.” The relationship between the soul and the body is a highly specific one, comparable to the relationship between an art and its tools.

From Book I of *De Anima*, we can take the following points: 1) the soul is the principle of animal life, 2) any account of the soul will require an account of the specific

⁸¹ *De Anima* 407b14-26: “Et dicamus quod est alia improbabilitas contingens huic sermoni et pluribus sermonibus de anima; et est quia ipsi coniungunt animam corpori et ponunt eam in eo, et non dant cum hoc qua de causa sit coniuncta cum eo, et que est disposition illius corporis. Et licet hoc, ut reputo, necessarium sit. Quoniam propter communicationem hoc agit et hoc patitur et hoc movet et hoc movetur, et nichil ex hoc fit in quibuscunque adinvicem. Dicere enim hoc in eis est simile ac si aliquis diceret quod ars Carpentaria existat in Musica. Ars enim ita utitur instrumentis sicut anima corpore.”

characteristics of the body as well as the relationship between the soul and the body, and 3) any account of the affections of the soul will require an account of the material conditions, the form, and the end or purpose. Aristotle, thus, sets up the guidelines for the study of the soul.

Aristotle begins Book II of *De Anima* by asking what the soul is, immediately drawing upon the hylomorphic principle. His answer begins with a brief discussion of substance recalling the discussion in the *Metaphysics* where substance is considered in different senses, as matter, form, or the compound of both. Substance can be considered in the sense of matter, i.e., “that which in itself is not a this,” in the sense of form or essence, i.e., “that precisely in virtue of which a thing is called a this,” or in the sense of the compound of matter and form. Aristotle identifies matter as “potentiality” (*dunamis*) and form as “actuality” (*entelecheia*) and then adds an important qualification of actuality, distinguishing two kinds: knowledge and reflecting.⁸²

Aristotle next considers that among substances are to be found both bodies and natural bodies. He notes that some natural bodies have life, some do not. Life is here defined in terms of activity: “self-nutrition, and growth, and decay.”⁸³ Aristotle then claims that “every natural body which has life in it is a substance in the sense of a composite.”⁸⁴ In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle explicitly identifies the soul as primary

⁸² *De Anima* 412a7-10: “Substantiarum autem quedam est substantia secundum materiam, et ista non est per se hoc; et quedam est forma per quam dicitur in re quod est hoc; est autem tertia, et est illud quod est ex ambobus. Et material est illa que est in potentiali; forma autem est perfectio. Et forma est duobus modis: unus est sicut scire, et alius est sicut speculari.”

⁸³ *De Anima* 412a14: “Et dicere est vitam nutriri et augeri et diminui.”

⁸⁴ *De Anima* 412a15-16: “Unde necesse est ut omne corpus naturale habens communicationem in vita sit substantia; et est substantia secundum quod est compositum.” See also Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 158. Sheldon M. Cohen points out that this is an odd claim since it might be expected that the body is simply matter, the material component of the composite and not a compound itself of form and matter. Cohen contends that Aristotle makes this unexpected claim presumably because we can think of the living body as distinct from the soul or as the ensouled body. As distinct from the soul, the body is simply the material

substance and the body as matter.⁸⁵ And in *De Anima*, Aristotle identifies the body as the subject or matter of the composite, for the soul cannot be a body.⁸⁶ The soul, then, is the form, more specifically, “the form of a natural body having life potentially within it.”⁸⁷

What does Aristotle mean that the soul is the form of a natural body “having life potentially in it?”

Above, Aristotle defined life in terms of activity: nutrition, growth, and decay. What Aristotle means by a body that has life potentially in it, is not a body that is not alive, but a body that is alive and therefore has the capacity for life as activity.⁸⁸ A living body is a body that has life (as activity) potentially in it. Only a living body has the capacity to carry out life activities. However, unless some of these activities are being exercised there is no life. So it seems that Aristotle runs into problems using the hylomorphic principle to specify what the material component is in the composite of the living being. As seen above, the matter of the composite must potentially be what the form is actually. The problem here is that Aristotle identifies the matter in the body-soul composite as the already ensouled body, the living body, and thus, as Akrill explains, the body does not have life potentially but necessarily.⁸⁹ In fact, Aristotle further claims that a body that is no longer alive is a body in name only raising the thorny problem known as

component of the composite, human being. But an ensouled body is the living body. But every actually existing matter is already formed matter. So the body is itself a composite.

⁸⁵ *Metaphysics* 7.11, 1037a5.

⁸⁶ *De Anima* 412a17-18: “Et quia corpus vivum est corpus, et est tale, impossibile est ut anima sit corpus.”

⁸⁷ *De Anima* 412a20-21: “Unde necesse est ut anima sit substantia secundum quod est forma corporis naturalis habentis vitam in potentia.”

⁸⁸ *De Anima* 412b25-26: “Et illud quod habet potentiam ut vivat non est illud a quo ablata est anima, sed illud quod habet animam.” Aristotle explains, “We must not understand by that which is potentially capable of living what has lost the soul it had, but only what still retains it. . .” See also, Cohen 1996, 158.

⁸⁹ J.L. Akrill, “Aristotle’s Definitions of *psuchē*,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 73 (1972-73): 119-33. See also S. Marc Cohen 1992, 68.

the homonymy principle.⁹⁰ For example, Aristotle asks us to suppose that an axe is a natural body, such that being an axe is its essence.⁹¹ If the essence of being an axe is no longer present, then the axe is an axe in name only.⁹² So too with an eye that is deprived of sight; an eye without sight is an eye in name only.⁹³ Thus, if we try to specify the body without the soul as the matter in the body-soul composite, S. Marc Cohen explains that “we must fail, for if what we pick out is not alive, then what we pick out is not a body.”⁹⁴ While this is certainly a difficulty, I agree with Cohen here that the point of the homonymy principle is to remind us of the “crucial importance of function in the definition of a living creature,” and the fact that Aristotle contends that what a thing is is always determined by its function.⁹⁵ At the beginning of Book I of *De Anima*, Aristotle claims that to grasp the nature of an affection of the soul, an enmattered account, we need to specify the material conditions, the formal conditions, and the teleological conditions. A teleological account always includes the function of the being. The problem with the living being is that its functioning is at once psychic and bodily. So that while the soul is not a magnitude or a body, it (or at least some of its powers) cannot exist without a

⁹⁰ Aristotle discusses the homonymy principle at *De Anima* 412b12-23 and *Metaphysics* 1035b24. For further discussions on the homonymy principle see Akrill 1972-73, 119-133; S. Marc Cohen 1992, 68-72; and Jennifer Whiting, “Living Bodies,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 75-91.

⁹¹ *De Anima* 412b12-13: “Et est substantia secundum hanc intentionem, scilicet secundum illud quod hoc corpus est quod est; quemadmodum, si aliquod instrumentum esset corpus naturale, ut securis, tunc acumen secures esset substantia et eius anima secundum hanc intentionem.”

⁹² *De Anima* 412b14-14: “Et ideo, cum istud est abstractum, non erit securis post nisi equivoce.”

⁹³ *De Anima* 412b18-22: “Et considerandum est quod dicitur de hoc in membris etiam. Oculus enim si esset animal, tunc visus esset anima eius; iste enim est substantia oculi, que est secundum suam intentionem. Et corpus oculi est material visus, qui cum deficit, non dicitur oculus nisi equivoce, sicut dicitur de oculo lapideo.”

⁹⁴ S. Marc Cohen 1992, 68.

⁹⁵ S. Marc Cohen 1992, 69-71. Cohen points out that Aristotle insists upon functional definitions “even of copper and silver, of water and fire. (71)

specific kind of body. To know the soul is to know the living body. Aristotle must adjust his hylomorphic principle in order to comprehend the wholeness of the living being.⁹⁶

This brings us back to the two types of actuality that Aristotle distinguishes: knowledge and reflecting. The special case of the living body as a substance is a special case of hylomorphism because it requires a higher degree of unity of form and matter than the case of the bronze sphere because it has to function as a whole. Moreover, Aristotle has to account not just for the existence of a living being, but the living of the living being. This means being able to account for both life and the exercise of that life. The unity of a living being has to be a functional unity where the matter is of such a kind that it has the capacity to carry out the functions of life. But such a capacity is held only by the body that is already living.

To address the complicated status of the living being, Aristotle distinguishes a first actuality (*entelecheia*) and a second actuality (*entelecheia*). The first actuality can be understood as a capacity or aptitude and is contrasted with the second actuality which is the exercise of this capacity. Sheldon M. Cohen explains that first actuality stands to second actuality as a sort of *dunamis* or power.⁹⁷ But, according to Cohen, Aristotle defines *dunamis* most basically as a source of change, the ability to change into something else.⁹⁸ The ability to change into something else is the kind of change that Aristotle calls a *kinesis*.⁹⁹ But not all *dunamis* is change of this type. There is that change which is the exercise of a capacity. The first actuality is this second sort of

⁹⁶ See, for example, Whiting 1992, 86. Whiting argues that Aristotle must show “how a form’s coming to be embodied in some matter can yield a product which is not a property of what persists and which is itself an intrinsic unity—that, a unity neither component of which is separable from the other in a way such that it could serve as subject in some other unity. . . the form is essentially the form of this matter, and the matter essentially the matter of this form.”

⁹⁷ Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 164.

⁹⁸ Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 164.

⁹⁹ Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 164.

change, it “marks a things’ ability to exhibit or become what it really is, rather than for it to become different.”¹⁰⁰ Aristotle says that the soul, like knowledge, is such a first actuality. Knowledge is a first actuality (*entelecheia*) that makes possible the second actuality or exercise of knowledge, reflection. Thus, the soul is the first actuality of a “natural body having life potentially in it.”¹⁰¹ A body that potentially has life is a body that is organized, that is, has organs which have the power or capacity to carry out the exercise of life activities. Thus, the soul is, more precisely, the first actuality of a natural organized body.¹⁰²

Aristotle contends that the soul is the “what it is to be” for a body with organs, the soul is “an account or essence,” as well as “the cause or source of the living body.”¹⁰³ In fact, the soul is the source of movement, the end, and the essence of the whole living body.¹⁰⁴ As the essence and actuality of the living body, the soul or some parts of it cannot exist separate from the body.¹⁰⁵ Aristotle emphasizes here that the soul is the actuality of certain kind of body and again claims that it is a mistake not to specify the

¹⁰⁰ Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 165.

¹⁰¹ *De Anima* 412a27-28: “Et ideo anima est prima perfectio corporis naturalis habentis vitam in potentia.”

¹⁰² *De Anima* 412a28: “Et est secundum quod est organicum.” See also, *De Anima* 412b5: “Si igitur aliquod universale dicendum est in omni anima, dicemus quod est prima perfectio corporis naturalis organici.”

¹⁰³ *De Anima* 412b11-12: “Et est substantia secundum hanc intentionem, scilicet secundum illud quod hoc corpus est quod est;” See also, *De Anima* 414a14: “Necesse est igitur ut sit aliqua intentio et forma, non quasi materia et quasi subiectum.” See also, *De Anima* 415b8-9: “Anima igitur est corporis vivi causa et principium tribus modis determinatis.”

¹⁰⁴ *De Anima* 415b11-12: “Est enim illud ex quo fit motus, et illud propter quod fuit corpus; et et etiam anima est causa secundum quod est substantia, que est causa esse omnium.”

¹⁰⁵ *De Anima* 413a4-5: “Quoniam autem anima non est abstracta a corpore, aut pars eius, . . .” See also, *De Anima* 414a19-20: “Et propter hoc bene existimaverunt dicentes quod anima non est extra corpus neque est corpus.”

characteristics of the body required for the soul because the actuality of any given thing requires a matter that has the appropriate potentiality.¹⁰⁶

The way that Aristotle characterizes the unity of soul and body goes well beyond the hylomorphism of an artifact. Whether artifacts have real essences, or whether beds have a higher degree of unity than that of a heap are questions that are open to debate.¹⁰⁷ The case of the living being stands apart from these artifacts in that there seems to be a higher degree of unity of form and matter. When Aristotle defines the soul as the form of the body that potentially has life in it such that the soul is the “what it is to be” of an organized body, he is not concerned simply about the substantiality of the soul but is also addressing the nature of the relationship of the soul to the body, rejecting any contingency in the relationship between this body and this soul.¹⁰⁸ Recall that Aristotle rejects the notion that he attributes to the Pythagoreans that “any soul could be clothed by any body.” Rather, Aristotle contends that each body seems to have a form and shape of its own. Since matter in itself has no determinateness, then matter without being highly formed, cannot account for the intricate and definable structures found in the bodily organs necessary for life. But since the body and bodily organs exist for the sake of the soul, and the soul is the actuality of the a body with organs, then the structure of the bodily organ must be understood as form. But the bodily organ as formed is the ensouled

¹⁰⁶ *De Anima* 414a26-27: “Corpus autem non est, sed per corpus, et propter hoc est in corpore, et in tali corpore, non sicut fecerunt Antiqui in ponendo eam in corpore absque determinatione illius corporis, quod corpus sit et cuiusmodi; et hoc licet non quodcunque recipiat quancunque.”

¹⁰⁷ See Sheldon M. Cohen 1996, 118, 169.

¹⁰⁸ Whiting 1992, 86-87. In the current literature there is much debate concerning the question of whether Aristotle is a functionalist. While it is outside the scope of this dissertation to engage this debate, it is worth mentioning here some of the important articles. Functionalism, according to S. Marc Cohen 1992, 58, is the claim that mental states cannot be reduced to physical states but are rather the “functional states of the physical systems that realize them.” This suggests a possibly contingent relationship between the matter and form. See also M.F. Burnyeat, “Is an Aristotelian Philosophy of Mind Still Credible? A Draft,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 15-26; Nussbaum, Martha C. and Hilary Putnam, “Changing Aristotle’s Mind,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 27-56.

bodily organ. Moreover, it is an organ that is attached to the living body. The point is, in no way can inanimate matter account for the physical structures of the bodily organ required for the activities of life, like nutrition, growth, or sensation.¹⁰⁹ When Aristotle defines the soul as the form of a living body, he is defining the relationship of matter and form as essential. The living being is an essentially ensouled being. While it is well agreed upon that Aristotle has this notion of an essentially ensouled being, how it is to be understood and its significance has given rise to much debate.¹¹⁰ For the purposes of this dissertation, I simply want to stress the intimate relationship between the soul and the body. It is within the intimacy of this relationship that Aristotle explains the various powers of the soul, nutrition, sensation, and thought. Both nutrition and sensation are powers of the soul that depend on the body but thought is seen to be a different kind of power that does not itself depend on the body.¹¹¹ Though sensation is dependent on the body and thinking is independent from the body, Aristotle holds that a kinship exists between them. In the discussion on sensation that follows, I will pay particular attention to this kinship using it to guide the way into the main focus of this discussion, intellectual cognition.¹¹² Aristotle gives his main discussion on sense cognition or sense perception in *De Anima*.

¹⁰⁹ Alan Code and Julius Moravcsik, "Explaining Various Forms of Living," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 133.

¹¹⁰ Whiting, 1992; Burnyeat 1992.

¹¹¹ *De Anima*, 413b24-26: "Intellectus autem et virtus speculativa, nichil adhuc declaratum est de eis. Sed tamen videtur quod hoc sit aliud genus anime."

¹¹² *De Anima* 427a20: ". . . existimando quod intelligere est quasi sentire corporale quoquo modo (anima enim in hiis duobus modis iudicat aliquid et cognoscit ipsum). . ."

Sensation. Aristotle characterizes sensation or sense perception as a “qualitative alteration” and says that only that which has soul is capable of sensing.¹¹³ Sensation requires the composite of the body and soul and more specifically, an appropriate bodily organ:

A primary sense-organ is that in which such a power is seated. The sense and its organ are the same in fact, but their essence is not the same. What perceives is, of course, a spatial magnitude, but we must not admit that either the having the power to perceive or the sense itself is a magnitude; what they are is a certain form or power in a magnitude.¹¹⁴

Sense perception involves one or more of the five senses, each of which has its own proper organ and its own proper object. Whereas in nutrition, the soul acts upon its object, food, it is the other way around in sensation which depends on “a process of movement or affection from without.”¹¹⁵ What Aristotle observes about sensation is that it only happens when there is an external sensible object present. He compares sensation to the combustible which requires an external agent to ignite.¹¹⁶ Since sense perception is a process which requires the material bodily organ and the material sensed object, somehow the material object acts through a medium upon the sense organ; the organ is thus affected qualitatively by the sensed object. This change of quality can be understood in a certain sense as a transition from potentiality to actuality, e.g., the sense is potentially

¹¹³ *De Anima* 415b24-26. Following Hamlyn’s reading of Aristotle, I will use the terms sensation and sense perception interchangeably. See D. W. Hamlyn, *Sensation and Perception* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1961), 28.

¹¹⁴ *De Anima* 424a24-27: “Et in quo est ista potentia est primum sentiens. Sunt igitur idem, in esse autem diversa. Ilud enim uod sentit est aliqua magnitudo, et non secundum quod sentit; neque sensus sit magnitudo, sed intentio et virtus illius.”

¹¹⁵ *De Anima* 416a35: “Et etiam, nutrimentum patitur quoquo modo a nutribili, sed non econtrario, sicut Carpentarius non a material, sed material ab illo. . .” and *De Anima* 416b33-34: “Dicamus igitur quod sentire accidit secundum motum et passionem, sicut diximus; existimatur enim quod est aliqua alteratio.”

¹¹⁶ *De Anima* 417a4-9: “Sed est irrationabile quare sensus non sentient se, et quare etiam nullus sensus agit absque extrinseco, et in eis sun ignis et terra et alia elementa, et sunt illa que comprehenduntur a sensu per se, et accidentia contingentia eis. Dicamus igitur quod sensus non est in actu, sed tantumm in potential, et ideo non sentimus; quemadmodum combustibile non comburitur a se absque comburente; et si hoc non esset, combureret se et non indigeret quod ignis esset in actu.”

what the sensed object actually is. Actually sensing the object means that this object acts upon the sense so that the sense actually becomes what it only potentially was.

Aristotle gives a detailed account of what happens in the process of each sense. Each sense has its own proper object that cannot be perceived by another sense such that when the sense perceives its own proper object, it does so without error.¹¹⁷ Examples of the proper objects of the various senses include: color for sight, sound for hearing, and flavor for taste.¹¹⁸ In addition to the proper sensibles, there are the common sensibles which include: motion, rest, number, figure, and magnitude, and are not proper to any one sense but common to all.¹¹⁹ In an interesting passage, Aristotle explains the difference between an incidental object of sense and a proper object of sense. The example that Aristotle uses for an incidental object is a white object that we see that is the son of Diates (in the Latin text below we see that it is Socrates). We see the white object because color is the proper object of sight whereas the son of Diates is only incidental to our perception of white.¹²⁰ The point that Aristotle emphasizes here is that white is a proper sensible because it is perceptible in itself, that is, it affects the senses whereas the “son of Diates” does not. Moreover, Aristotle says that the very structure of each sense is adapted to the nature of its perceptible object.¹²¹ Here again, Aristotle attends to the specific characteristics of the body that the sensitive part of the soul requires in order to

¹¹⁷ *De Anima* 418a12-13: “Et est dicere proprius quem non potest alter sensus sentire, et illud quod impossibile est ut ei contingat error. . .”

¹¹⁸ *De Anima* 418a13-14: “. . . visus apud colorem, et auditus apud vocem, et gustus apud saporem.”

¹¹⁹ *De Anima* 418a18-20: “Communia autem sunt motus et quies et numerus et figura et quantitas. Ista enim non sunt propria alicui, sed communia eis omnia; motus enim sentitur tactu et visu.”

¹²⁰ *De Anima* 418a20-23: “Accidentaliter autem dicitur in re quod est sensibilis, quasi sit album Socrates; iste enim non sentitur nisi accidentaliter; accidit enim albo quod fuit iste. Et ideo non patitur a sensibili secundum quod est sic.”

¹²¹ *De Anima* 418a23-25: “Ea autem que sunt sensibilia per se et propria sunt sensibilia in rei veritate; et sunt ea que sentire est nata substantia cuiusque sensuum.”

sense. Moreover, what is sensed is that which in its nature is able to be sensed. What senses is that which in its nature is able to sense.

In an important passage in *De Anima* 2.5, Aristotle claims that “Everything that is acted upon or moved is acted upon by an agent which is actually at work.”¹²² What is acted upon is in a state of potentiality in relation to the actuality of the agent. The different senses of potentiality and actuality need to be distinguished, and here Aristotle uses the example of being a knower. Someone can be a knower in the sense that she is in the class of beings that are able to know, in the sense that she actually possesses a certain kind of knowledge, and in the sense that she actually is exercising that knowledge such that it is in this third sense that she is most actually a knower.¹²³ When she is in the first sense of being a knower, she is in a state of essential potency where she requires a change of quality, that is, acquiring knowledge by way of repeated instruction.¹²⁴ In the second sense of being a knower, when she actually possesses a certain knowledge, she is in a state of accidental potency. When she actually exercises the knowledge that she has she is not fully actualizing herself as a knower. To understand the transition between having knowledge and exercising it requires a more careful consideration of the being “acted upon.”

¹²² *De Anima* 417a17-18: “Et omne quod patitur et movetur non patitur et movetur nisi ab aliquo agente in actu.”

¹²³ *De Anima* 417a23-417b1: “Dicamus igitur quod intendimus, cum dicimus quo aliquid, v.g. homo, quod est sciens, quod homo est de habentibus scientiam. Et quandoque dicimus hoc sicut dicimus de eo qui iam acquisivit scientiam Gramatice quod est sciens. Sed potentia in utroque istorum non est eodem modo, sed potentia primi est quia suum genus est tale, secundi autem est quia cum voluerit, potest inspicere, dum aliquid extrinsecum non impedit ipsum. Qui autem considerat est in perfectione, et est in rei veritate sciens hoc. Illi igitur duo primi sunt scientes in potentia, sed alter eorum cum alterabitur per doctrinam et mutabitur multotiens ex habitu ad dispositionem contrariam, alius autem quando mutabitur ex habere sensum aut scientiam Gramatice (sed non agit) quousque agat; modus igitur eius est alius.”

¹²⁴ I here use the terminology of the medieval thinker who understands the two senses of potentiality here as essential and accidental.

Aristotle distinguishes two meanings of being “acted upon:” first, “to be acted upon” means “the extinction of one of two contraries by the other” and second, “the maintenance of what is potential by the agency of what is actual and already like what is acted upon, as actual to potential.”¹²⁵ Aristotle specifically discusses in this passage the transition from merely possessing knowledge to being an actual knower and contends that such a transition either ought not to be thought of as an alteration at all or else a different kind of alteration.¹²⁶ The process by which one who has the power to know and who then learns or acquires knowledge by way of the one who actually knows ought only to be understood as a process of acting upon in the sense that a change to a thing’s disposition and nature has occurred.¹²⁷ To be a knower fully requires that someone first acquires knowledge and then exercises it. By acquiring knowledge something about the knower’s disposition has fundamentally changed so that she is now in a different state of potentiality such that she now has the capacity to exercise that knowledge. Aristotle says that the process of sensation is comparable to intellection. Aristotle says that, at birth, a living thing, in terms of sensation, is already in the same state of potentiality as the state of possessing knowledge, and thus, actual sensation corresponds to the exercising of knowledge.¹²⁸ The sense is already disposed to sensing such that it only requires that there be an external sensible object present to it for it to actually sense. The point here is

¹²⁵ *De Anima* 417b2-5: “Et passio etiam non est simpliciter, sed quedam est aliqua corruptio a contrario, et quedam magis videtur esse evasio eius quod est in potentia ab eo quod est in actu et simile.”

¹²⁶ *De Anima* 417b5-7: “Ista igitur est dispositio eius quod est in potentia apud perfectionem; non enim considerat nisi habens scientiam. Et hoc aut non est alteratio, quoniam additio in ipso erit ad perfectionem, aut est aliud genus alterationis.”

¹²⁷ *De Anima* 417b10-16: “Quod autem revertitur ad perfectionem ab eo quod in potentia existit in capitulo intelligendi non est rectum ut vocetur disciplina sed oportet ponere ei aliud nomen. Qui autem addiscit postquam fuit in potentia, et accepit scientiam ab eo qui est in perfectione Doctor, oportet aut ut non dicatur omnino pati, aut ut dicatur quod alteratio est duplex, transmutatio scilicet ad dispositiones non esse, et transmutatio ad habitum et naturam.”

¹²⁸ *De Anima* 417b17-19: “Et prima transmutatio sentientis est a generante, ita quod, cum fuerit generatum, statim est sentire etiam, sicut scientia est. Et quod est etiam in actu est simile considerationi. Sed tamen differunt, quod agentia in hoc sunt extrinseca, ut visum et auditum, et similiter alia sensibilia.”

that the change involved in sensation is unlike ordinary change. It is a change in which that which has the capability of sensing actually now senses.

In the process of being acted upon, the sense and the sensed object lose their dissimilarity such that the sense which is acted upon becomes like in quality to the object that acted upon it.¹²⁹ The sense organ is that part of the body “which is potentially such as its object is actually.”¹³⁰ The sense organ has a structure that is adapted to its proper object. Its proper object is by nature perceptible; the sense organ by nature is that which is able to perceive. What makes an sensible object what it actually is, i.e., actually sensible, is its form, not its matter. Somehow the sense is potentially what it senses, not the whole of the material object but just what makes the external sensed object sensible, and this is the sensible form. But the sense does not become exactly what the object is, rather it becomes only a likeness or receives a likeness. How does the sense receive the form of its object?

In order to answer this question we need to consider the elements that are involved in the process of sensation as well as Aristotle’s characterization of the way the form is received by the sense organ. I will discuss the former first. Aristotle discusses each sense in detail, for my purposes here, I will discuss sight only. The object of sight is the visible, and this is color.¹³¹ Every color, Aristotle explains has the power to move the transparent where the transparent is that which is visible, though not in itself, its visibility

¹²⁹ *De Anima* 418a5-6: “Et sentiens in potentia est sicut sensatum in perfectione, secundum quod diximus; patitur enim dum non est simile, et cum patitur, assimilatur.”

¹³⁰ *De Anima* 423b31 – 424a1: “Illud autem quod est sentiens et tangens, et in quo est primus sensus qui dicitur tactus, est membrum quod est in potentia talis dispositionis. Sentire enim est aliquod pati quoquo modo.”

¹³¹ *De Anima* 418a 26: “Illud igitur cui attribuitur visus est visibile. Et visibile est color. . .”

comes from the color of something else.¹³² Color sets in movement the transparent air which is the medium between the visible external object and the eye. A medium is necessary because if the object of color is placed on the eye, the eye will not see.¹³³ Somehow the color (and in the case of hearing, sound) acts upon the transparent medium which then acts upon the eye. All sensation involves the external object, the medium that is acted upon by the external object and which then acts upon the sense organ, and the sense organ itself.¹³⁴ When a proper sensible acts upon the sense its effect is to bring about a perception of it. For example, when an odor or smell acts upon the sense of smell, Aristotle says that its effect is to make something smell it.¹³⁵ While the air is certainly affected by the smell, that is, moved by the smell to act up the organ of smell, the air itself does not smell the odor because it is not capable of doing so, only the sense organ of smell is capable of doing so.¹³⁶ Only that which is capable of smelling the odor

¹³² *De Anima* 418b1-6: “Et omnis color est movens diaffonum in actu; et hoc est natura eius. . .Dicamus igitur quod diaffonum est illud quod est visibile, sed non visibile per se neque simpliciter, sed propter colorem extranei.”

¹³³ *De Anima* 419a12-20: “Hoc enim etiam est illud quod fuit in colore quid est, scilicet quod st illud quod movet diaffonum i actu; et perfectio diaffoni est lux. Et signum eius manifestum est, quoniam, si posueris aliquod habens colorem super ipsum visum, non videbitur. Sed color movet diaffonum sicut, aer cum continuatur, movetur sensus ab eo. . .Visus enim non fit nisi quando sensus patitur aliqua passione; sed impossibile est ut visus patiatur a colore; remanet igitur ut patiatur a medio, unde necesse est ut aliquid sit in medio.”

¹³⁴ See Aristotle’s discussion in *De Anima* 419a25-424a15 in which he gives a detailed outline of the other senses and claims that in each case a medium is required. Sometimes the medium is distinct from the sense organ, in other cases the medium is united to the sense organ. The point that I want to make here is that the requirement of the medium in the process of sensation complicates how we are to understand sensation as the reception of the sensible form and the nature of this form. Does the sense organ receive the form in a way different from the medium or is it the same? Does the form have a like existence in the medium as it does in the sense organ? What is the ontological status of the sensible form either in the medium or in the sense organ? These are some of the questions that arise in the way that the medieval thinker comes to understand the process of Aristotelian sensation as a “multiplication of species” where species refers to the sensible form. These questions are ones that I will address in Chapter 4. For a discussion on the multiplication of species theory see, for example, Tachau 1988, especially Chapters 1-3.

¹³⁵ *De Anima* 424b5-8: “Si igitur olfactum est odor, contingit ut omnis res que facit olfacere facit per odorem. Unde necesse est quod nichil ex eis que non possunt olfacere patiatur ab odore; et iste est sermo de aliis; neque etiam aliquid exi eis que possunt, nisi secundum quod quodlibet eorum est sentiens.”

¹³⁶ *De Anima* 424b15-18: “Dicamus igitur quod non omne corpus est innaturum pati a sono et ab odoore, et quod patitur non est determinatum neque permanens, v. g. aer; est enim ventus, et propter hoc patitur. Que

can be acted upon in such a way that sensation occurs, and in order for sensation to occur, an ensouled and properly structured sense organ is required. I am now able to address how Aristotle characterizes the reception of form by the sense organ.

Aristotle explains that the sense and the sense organ are in fact the same, but their essence is not.¹³⁷ While what carries out the act of perception is the bodily organ or that which has “spatial magnitude,” the actual acts of perception are themselves distinct from the bodily organ: “what they are is a certain form or power in a magnitude.”¹³⁸ In a well-known but controversial passage in *De Anima* II, 12, Aristotle explains the activity of sense perception:

Generally, about all perception, we can say that a sense is what has the power of receiving into itself the sensible forms of things without the matter, in the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold, what produces the impression is a signet of bronze or gold, but not qua bronze or gold;¹³⁹

Aristotle compares the act of sensation, the reception of the sensible form without the matter, to the way in which “a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold.” The impression is made by the gold ring not qua gold but as it is a solid object in the shape or form of a signet ring. The wax receives the form of the ring not the matter of the ring. But the reception of form without the matter of the agent, Joseph Owens explains, is common to all change for Aristotle and is not peculiar to the kind of

est igitur differentia inter olfacere et pati? Dicamus igitur quod olfacere est sentire; cum autem aer patitur, velociter fit sensatus.”

¹³⁷ *De Anima* 424a 24-25: “Et in quo est ista potentia est primum sentiens. Sunt igitur idem, in esse autem diversa.”

¹³⁸ *De Anima* 424a 27-28: “Illud enim quod sentit est aliqua magnitudo, et non secundum quod sentit; neque sensus est magnitudo, sed intentio et virtus illius.”

¹³⁹ *De Anima* 424a 18-22: Et dicendum est universaliter de omni sensu quod sensus est recipiens formas sensibilium sine materia, v.g. quod cera recipit formam anuli sine ferro aut auro, et recipit signum quod est ex cupro aut ex auro, sed non secundum quod est cuprum aut aurum.”

change that happens in sensation.¹⁴⁰ What then, is the kind of change that Aristotle wants to indicate in his description of sensation as the reception of the sensible form “without the matter?” Does it involve a bodily change, a psychic change, or both? How is this phrase, “without the matter,” to be understood? These are critical questions not only in terms of understanding the process of sensation but also in terms of understanding the likeness of the sensible object that now exists in the soul at the level of the body.

In *De Anima* II, 12, 424a18-19, Aristotle, as quoted above, defines sensation as the reception of the sensible form without the matter. At 424b3 he contrasts this reception by the sense with the example of the plant being warmed or cooled as a process of receiving the forms of sensible objects “with their matter.” Aristotle claims that plants are unable to perceive because they do not have a mean. Without the mean, a plant has no principle in it for taking in the sensible form without the matter; plants are affected by sensible forms with their matter. Though it is true that the hand can be warmed in the way that the plant can, there is a simultaneous awareness of this warmth by the sense, an awareness that is not present in the plant. Aristotle at *De Anima* III, 2, 425b11-15 claims that through the power of sense we are both aware of the sense object and aware that we are sensing. There is a vast amount of literature on *De Anima* 2.12 concerning just what Aristotle means by receiving the form without matter. I will discuss first a traditional understanding of this passage and then briefly discuss some of the current debate.

¹⁴⁰ Joseph Owens, “Aristotle—Cognition a Way of Being,” in *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed. John R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 74-80, 77-78. See also Joseph Owens, “Aristotelian Soul as Cognitive of Sensibles, Intelligibles, and Self,” (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 81-98. Owens makes the same observation, namely, that, “In every type of efficient causality observable in the universe does not the matter of the agent remain in the agent? It is not received by the patient,” 84.

Owens contends that in defining sensation as the reception of the sensible form without the matter, as opposed to the plant that receives the form with the matter, Aristotle is distinguishing between the cognitional and non-cognitional reception of form.¹⁴¹ Whereas the plant's reception of form is merely physical, i.e., the plant is not aware of the received warmth, the sense is cognitional, that is, aware.¹⁴² The point is not to say that matter is not involved in sensation, for Owens contends that, for Aristotle, matter is involved "in every cognitive act by a man, as well as by every sensible agent that imparts the form."¹⁴³ The point is rather to understand the precise meaning of matter in this phrase, "without the matter."

Owens argues that it is not meant in a "jejune physical sense," that is, 'matter' here seems to mean the highly specific nature of the ring, gold, as opposed to its generic nature, solid body.¹⁴⁴ Owens argues, the "generic nature of a solid body always accompanies the notion of a device," since for Aristotle, an accident is inconceivable apart from the substance in which it inheres.¹⁴⁵ The device is the signet, and as device it is an accident of a solid body. So the distinction between matter and form in this particular instance, Owens argues, is a distinction between a body specifically determined, gold, and the notion of body in general as determined by a specific accident like a device. The reception of the form is indifferent to the gold. Thus, according to Owens, "the agent impresses the form on the patient as the form of a solid body," not as

¹⁴¹ Owens 1981, 82.

¹⁴² Owens 1981, 82.

¹⁴³ Owens 1981, 83.

¹⁴⁴ Owens 1981, 84.

¹⁴⁵ Owens 1981, 84; see also *Categories* 1a24-25. How the accident is understood and especially in terms of inherence is an issue that becomes important for Scotus and will have some impact on his cognitive theory and especially on the nature of the intelligible species which will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

the form of gold.¹⁴⁶ If the phrase “without the matter” is meant to bear the weight of the distinction between the cognitional reception of form and the non-cognitional reception of form, how is this meaning of matter relevant?

Owens contends that Aristotle here means the matter of the agent rather than the matter of the recipient. But even so, matter here can take on a highly specific meaning as shown in his above argument. In this way it is relevant to cognitional receptivity because it raises the issue of what the sense is sensing, and appears to be an explanation of the fact that each sense is aware of proper and common sensibles.¹⁴⁷ It is here, though, that Owens looks to the Greek commentary tradition for its interpretation on this passage.¹⁴⁸ Owens contends that this tradition understands the reception of the sensible form without matter to mean a solely cognitive reception, that is, form is received by form. While the sense organ is material, it does not receive the sensible form according to its materiality, but insofar as it is in act, that is, as it is a sense power at the level of form.¹⁴⁹ It cannot be the case that the sensible form is received into matter because then a new composite thing would be formed. Rather, the form is received by form thus giving support to Aristotle’s claim that the sense and the sensed are one in actuality just like the knower and the known are identified.¹⁵⁰ Owens appeals to *Metaphysics*, 1041b7-28 to make his case.

The form is what causes a thing to be and to be what it is. The sensible form received

¹⁴⁶ Owens 1981, 85.

¹⁴⁷ Owens 1981, 85. The proper object of each sense is that object that cannot be perceived by any other sense and when each sense perceives its on proper object there is no error. The proper or special objects of each sense are, for example, color-sight, sound-hearing, flavor-taste. The common sensible objects are those objects that are common to all of the senses and include movement, rest, number, figure, and magnitude. See *De Anima* 418a7-19 for Aristotle’s discussion.

¹⁴⁸ Owens 1981, 86-95. See also Richard Sorabji, “From Aristotle to Brentano: The Development of the Concept of Intentionality,” in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, supplementary volume, 1991: *Aristotle and the Later Tradition*, ed. H. Blumenthal and H. Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991): 227-59.

¹⁴⁹ Owens 1981, 92. I will take the point up again in chapter 4 when I am discussing Scotus’ own account.

¹⁵⁰ Owens 1981, 92.

without matter makes the sense be the sensed immaterially.¹⁵¹ Owens thus concludes this lengthy argument based on the highly refined understanding of matter that he offers, as well as the commentary tradition, to contend that Aristotle's claim that the sensible form is received without matter is meant as an explanation of the sensible objects themselves and not merely proper or common sensibles. Indeed, Owens argues that, "it is meant as an explanation of the nature of cognition itself insofar as cognition and immateriality coincide," for "to be a thing immaterially is to be aware of it."¹⁵²

This argument of Owens goes hand in hand with an argument he gives in another article in which he emphasizes that the form received without matter should be understood as a tool, an instrument in a causal chain.¹⁵³ He appeals to *De Anima* III, 8 where Aristotle draws an analogy between the soul and the hand: "the hand is a tool of tools, so thought is the form of forms and sense the form of sensible things."¹⁵⁴ Owens here contends that the underlying framework is one of "efficient causality through the use of instruments;" by means of a causal chain the external sense object acts on the percipient.¹⁵⁵ Owens concludes, "The mind is a form that makes use of the received forms as instruments for cognition, and correspondingly the sense uses the forms of sensible things."¹⁵⁶ The form is received without the matter because matter as indeterminate is unknowable and therefore cannot be instrumental in cognition since it is form that provides the perceptual and knowable content.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Owens 1981, 94.

¹⁵² Owens 1981, 95.

¹⁵³ Owens 1981, 78-79.

¹⁵⁴ *De Anima* 432a1-2: "Et ideo anima est quasi manus; manus enim est instrumentum instrumentis, et intellectus forma formis, et sensus forma sensatis."

¹⁵⁵ Owens 1981, 78.

¹⁵⁶ Owens 1981, 78.

¹⁵⁷ Owens 1981, 79.

Both of Owens' arguments serve to draw attention to two important principles that underlie Aristotle's theory of cognition: (1) The identity of the knower and the known, and (2) In sensing the object we are aware that we are sensing, in knowing the object we are aware that we are knowing.¹⁵⁸ Based on these principles, the sensed or cognized object is primary in Aristotle's cognitive theory for it is only in cognizing the object that the mind can think itself.¹⁵⁹

One of the debates in the current literature centers on the question whether the reception of the form without the matter requires a bodily change or is simply a psychological or "spiritual" change, that is, a change to the soul that indicates perceptual awareness.¹⁶⁰ In his text, *Sense and Perception*, D. W. Hamlyn explains the reception of form without matter as the sense organ receiving "a quality of the object without the material in which the quality inheres."¹⁶¹ Though, according to Hamlyn, the sense organ receives a quality, for example, color, he rejects that the eye becomes colored when we see color.¹⁶² Seeing something colored must mean more than simply being stimulated by a colored object. Somehow the "sense-organ and its object acquire the same quality" in perception.¹⁶³ Hamlyn's account emphasizes that the affection of the sense organ is a necessary condition of perception, suggesting that perhaps there is a bodily change but remains unclear on this point.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ Owens 1981, 80.

¹⁵⁹ Owens 1981, 80; *De Anima* 429b6-9: "Et cum quodlibet eorum fuerit sic, scilicet sicut dicitur scientia in actu (et hoc continget quando poterit intelligere per se), tunc etiam erit in potentia quoquo modo, sed non eodem modo quo ante erat, antequam scivit aut invenit. Et ipse tunc potest intelligere per se."

¹⁶⁰ For my purposes here, I will only consider only a few of the positions taken. The ones that I have chosen, those of Richard Sorabji and Myles Burnyeat, are both well known in the literature and represent more or less extreme readings of Aristotle.

¹⁶¹ Hamlyn 1961.

¹⁶² Hamlyn 1961, 21.

¹⁶³ Hamlyn 1961, 22.

¹⁶⁴ Hamlyn 1961, 23.

Richard Sorabji offers a literalist interpretation of *De Anima* 2.12.¹⁶⁵ Sorabji uses Descartes as a point of contrast with Aristotle, strongly advising against a Cartesian interpretation of Aristotle since for Aristotle there are no purely mental acts; every affection of the soul for Aristotle is a physiological process.¹⁶⁶ Sorabji reads Aristotle's conception of the soul as biological, that is, the soul is coextensive with life such that perception "manifests life" not consciousness.¹⁶⁷ This means, according to Sorabji, that perception is not something mental in the Cartesian sense, but is a physiological change where the organ is literally colored in the perceptual process.¹⁶⁸ Sorabji argues that sense perception involves a change in the body where, for example, the eye jelly literally becomes red. What is received is not little bits of matter, but color patches or perceptible forms.¹⁶⁹ In his article in which Sorabji replies to claims made by Burnyeat, he explains the eye jelly is itself transparent, and this is what enables it to receive or to take on color patches.¹⁷⁰ Sorabji draws a comparison from the sea's taking on color to explain how the

¹⁶⁵ Richard Sorabji, "Body and Soul in Aristotle," *Philosophy* 49(1974): 63-89. See also, Richard Sorabji, "Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle's Theory of Sense-Perception," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 195-226

¹⁶⁶ Sorabji 1974, 68-70.

¹⁶⁷ Sorabji, 1974, 68. Here Sorabji further distinguishes Aristotle from Descartes in terms of the role of self-awareness in the cognitive process. Whereas, for Descartes, self-awareness is central to his view of the soul and in cognition, this is not the case for Aristotle. Sorabji says that the closest that Aristotle comes to giving self-awareness a role in cognition is in a passage in the *Physics* where Aristotle says that a change in quality in the sense-organs of a living thing differs from a change in quality in a lifeless thing because it does not go unnoticed. (*Physics* 244b15-245a2) Sorabji argues that Aristotle is inconsistent in his claims about self-awareness, does not make self-awareness a distinguishing mark of mental acts, and has an odd way of explaining self-awareness as an awareness of the bodily organ. While this issue of the role of self-awareness in the cognitive process is not a concern in my discussion of Aristotle's account of sensation in this chapter, it is worth mentioning Sorabji's remarks here because I will argue in later Chapters that in Scotus' account of cognition, self-awareness does play a greater role than found in Aristotle.

¹⁶⁸ Sorabji 1974, 72. Sorabji cites a fair number of passages in *De Anima* to support his claim that Aristotle believes that when seeing red, the eye-jelly literally becomes red, such that this would be apparent by an appropriate observer.

¹⁶⁹ Sorabji 1992, 209.

¹⁷⁰ Richard Sorabji, "Aristotle on Sensory Processes and Intentionality. A Reply to Myles Burnyeat," in *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, ed. Dominik Perler (Boston: Brill, 2001), 49-61. See p. 53.

eye jelly literally becomes colored.¹⁷¹ The mechanism by which the sea takes on color is different from that of the eye, as the case of the sea depends upon a distance of viewing.¹⁷² The way in which the color patch is received in the eye is comparable to the sea's receptivity in that it "lacks the material basis of a body's own color, but it looks the way a body's own color looks, as opposed to being, for example, a mere encodement."¹⁷³ In other words, the color patch exists in the eye without the same material basis that the body's own color has in the body, yet it is not simply an encodement for, as Sorabji further explains, the color patch exists in the eye in such a way that it would be able to stimulate the medium in such a way that the ophthalmologist looking at the eye would see the color patch there.¹⁷⁴ Thus, Sorabji's claim that the eye literally becomes colored means that a patch of color comes to exist in the eye, and this is a physiological change. Sorabji not only argues that sensation is a physiological process that involves a bodily change, but also contends that Aristotle's *De Anima* fits well his other texts which reveal a whole program in which Aristotle gives physiological processes as the material causes of mental events.¹⁷⁵

Against such a view is the "spiritualist" reading offered by Myles Burnyeat.¹⁷⁶

Burnyeat sees himself following a long line of interpreters, John Philoponus, Thomas Aquinas, and Franz Brentano, all who deny the literalist reading and argue that receiving

¹⁷¹ Sorabji 2001, 53.

¹⁷² Sorabji 2001, 53.

¹⁷³ Sorabji 2001, 53.

¹⁷⁴ Sorabji 2001, 53. In Chapter 4, I discuss an example that Scotus often uses when he explains the sensible species, namely, when light passes through a piece of red glass such that a patch of red light appears on the wall. Though there is a red patch of light on the wall, still the wall is itself not colored red. On another point, Sorabji claims in several of his articles that it was the commentary tradition that moved away from a literal reading of the reception of a color patch, such as the one that he offers. Aristotle's commentators slowly came to understand color patches as intentional objects. (60) I discuss the intentional object in Chapter 4.

¹⁷⁵ Sorabji 2001, 59.

¹⁷⁶ Burnyeat 1992,

the form without the matter is “just one’s becoming aware.”¹⁷⁷ According to Burnyeat, perception is simply awareness and does not require any bodily change. Burnyeat argues while there are “no physiological sufficient conditions for perception to occur,” there are only necessary conditions that are states of receptivity to sensible forms.¹⁷⁸ Burnyeat ultimately does not see Aristotle’s program as including or requiring an explanation of perception beyond the claim that there just is some physical matter, for example, the matter of the sense organ, that is “pregnant with consciousness,” that is, simply and fundamentally both alive and endowed with the capacity to perceive.¹⁷⁹ Unlike Sorabji, Burnyeat contends that Aristotle does not offer a “bottom up” approach in his account of sensation, that is, Aristotle does not consider that there is any physiological event that underlies perception.¹⁸⁰ All that the reception of form without matter means is perceptual awareness.

These two accounts, on the one hand, Sorabji’s claim that sensation involves a bodily change and should be understood as a physiological process, and on the other hand, Burnyeat’s “spiritualist” reading that sensation is simply perceptual awareness that requires no bodily change, though it does require certain necessary conditions for receiving the sensible form, help to frame the issues that complicate an understanding of Aristotle’s own account of sensation. These are not the only thinkers who weigh in on these issues, but my purpose in discussing Sorabji’s and Burnyeat’s accounts is to bring out the critical issues, not only in the current literature, but also those confronting the medieval thinker. In my discussion in Chapter 4 of Aquinas’ and Scotus’ accounts of

¹⁷⁷ Burnyeat 1992, 18. I will discuss Aquinas’ interpretation of Aristotle in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

¹⁷⁸ Burnyeat 1992, 23.

¹⁷⁹ Burnyeat 1992, 19.

¹⁸⁰ Burnyeat 1992, 22-24.

sensation, these same issues will be a focus as well. I turn now to Aristotle's understanding of imagination.

Imagination. After discussing sensation, Aristotle turns briefly to the imagination (*phantasia*) before proceeding to intellection. In *De Anima* III, 3 Aristotle defines the imagination as "that in virtue of which an image arises for us."¹⁸¹ He explains that while imagination is different, in various ways, from both perceiving and discursive thought, it is also the case that where there is no sensation there is no imagination, and no judgment exists without imagination.¹⁸² So he concludes his examination of imagination by claiming that it must be "a movement resulting from an actual exercise of a power of sense."¹⁸³ Imagination takes its name from light for light is what makes sight possible.¹⁸⁴ The imagination for Aristotle is bodily, its images (phantasms) are in the internal sense organs and in this way resemble sensations.¹⁸⁵

The images (phantasms) of the imagination play a critical role in intellectual cognition. In *De Anima* III, 7 Aristotle explains how these images serve the intellectual soul "as if they were contents of perception."¹⁸⁶ Dorothea Frede argues that the imagination, particular, the imagination's image (phantasm) establishes the connection

¹⁸¹ *De Anima* 428a1: "Dicamus igitur quod, si ymaginatio est que fit que dicitur ymaginari non secundum similitudinem," For a discussion on the role of the *phantasia* in cognition see Dorothea Frede, "The Cognitive Role of *Phantasia* in Aristotle," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 279-295 and Malcolm Schofield, "Aristotle on the Imagination," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 249-278; G. Watson, "Phantasia in Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.3." *Classical Quarterly* 32(1982): 100-13; Kevin White, "The Meaning of *Phantasia* in Aristotle's *De Anima*, III, 3-8," *Dialogue* 24(1985): 483-505.

¹⁸² *De Anima* 427b14-15: "Ymaginatio autem est aliud a sensu et aliud a distinctione. Et hoc non fit sine sensu, et sine hoc non fit consilium."

¹⁸³ *De Anima* 429a2: ". . . ymaginatio igitur est motus a sensu qui est in actu."

¹⁸⁴ *De Anima* 429a3-4: "Et quia visus proprie est sensus, derivatum fuit ei nomen a luce; impossibile est enim videre sine luce." For a discussion on the etymology of *phantasia* see Schofield 1992 and Frede 1992.

¹⁸⁵ *De Anima* 429a5-6: "Et quia sensationes figuntur in eo, et ipse est eodem modo,

¹⁸⁶ *De Anima* 431a15: "Et in anima sensibili inveniuntur ymagines secundum modos sensuum."

between the intellect and the sense object.¹⁸⁷ Aristotle contends that the intellectual soul never thinks without an image (phantasm).¹⁸⁸ And what it thinks is the forms in the images.¹⁸⁹ As Frede explains, since both practical and theoretical reasoning have need of images, and sense perception cannot provide the necessary images for a variety of reasons, the imagination provides them.¹⁹⁰ The imagination produces the image or phantasm of sensations such that through the image the intellectual soul can think the form of the sensible object. The imagination then plays a critical role in cognition. It is the necessary link between the sense and the intellect while preserving the separation between them.¹⁹¹

Intellection. Aristotle devotes precious little time to his discussion of intellection to the consternation of his many and varied commentators.¹⁹² The point of my discussion here is to briefly discuss what Aristotle does say and point to some of the problems that arise. To facilitate this discussion on intellectual cognition I begin by quoting the most

¹⁸⁷ Frede 1992, 288.

¹⁸⁸ *De Anima* 431a16-17: "Et ideo nichil intelligit anima sine ymaginatione."

¹⁸⁹ *De Anima* 431b2: "Intelligit enim formas per primas ymaginationes."

¹⁹⁰ Frede 1992, 289.

¹⁹¹ Frede 1992, 292-3. Frede offers an intriguing insight that Aristotle realized that a link is necessary between the sense and the intellect, not just to provide an appropriate image for the intellect but because Aristotle both seeks to ground intellectual activity in the concrete and because he realized that "our thinking cannot be entirely abstract but always needs a kind of *Gestalt*."

¹⁹² Much literature has been devoted to Aristotle's discussion of intellection, and in particular, *De Anima* 3.5. See, for example, Jonathan Barnes, "Aristotle's Concept of Mind," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 72 (1971/72): 101-14. Reprinted in Barnes, Schofield, and Sorabji 1979, 32-41; Victor Caston, "Aristotle's Two Intellects: A Modest Proposal," *Phronesis* 44(1999): 199-227; Victor Caston, "Aristotle's Argument for Why the Understanding is not Compounded with the Body," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 16(2000): 135-75; Terence Irwin, "Aristotle's Philosophy of Mind," in *Psychology*, ed. Stephen Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 56-83. (= Companions to Ancient Thought, vol. 2.); Charles H. Kahn, "Aristotle on Thinking," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 359-80; L. A. Kosman, "What does the Maker Mind Make?" in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 343-58; Vasilis Politis, "Aristotle's Account of the Intellect as Pure Capacity," *Ancient Philosophy* 21(2001): 375-402; John Rist, "Notes on *De Anima* 3.5," *Classical Philology* 61(1966): 8-20; Kathleen Wilkes, "Psychê versus the Mind," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amelie Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 109-27.

critical and perhaps difficult to understand passage in which Aristotle explains intellection:

Since in every class of things, as in nature as a whole, we find two factors involved, a matter which is potentially all the particulars included in the class, a cause which is productive in the sense that it makes them all (the latter standing to the former, as e.g. an art to its material), these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul.

And in fact thought, as we have described it, is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things: this is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours.

Thought in this sense of it is separable, impassible, unmixed, since it is in its essential nature activity (for always the active is superior to the passive factor, the originating force to the matter).

Actual knowledge is identical with its object: in the individual, potential knowledge is in time prior to actual knowledge, but absolutely it is not prior even in time. It does not sometimes think and sometimes not think. When separated it is alone just what it is, and this alone is immortal and eternal (we do not remember because, while this is impassible, passive thought is perishable); and with this nothing thinks.¹⁹³

Aristotle begins the passage by reminding his reader of the ground of the being of classes of things and of the whole of nature; every single thing is composed of matter and form, potentiality and actuality. Matter is distinguished from form as that which is “potentially all the particulars in a class,” whereas form is the cause that “makes them all.”

What then are these two distinct powers in the intellective soul which Aristotle speaks of in *De Anima* 3.5?

¹⁹³ *De Anima* 430a10-26: “Et quia, quemadmodum in Natura, est aliquid in unoquoque genere quod est materia (et est illud quod est illa omnia in potentia), et aliud quod est causa et agens (et hoc est illud propter quod agit quilibet, sicut dispositio artificii apud materiam) necesse est ut anima existant hee differentie.

Oportet igitur ut in ea sit intellectus qui est intellectus secundum quod efficitur omne, et intellectus qui est intellectus secundum quod facit ipsum intelligere omne, et intellectus secundum quod intelligit omne, quasi habitus, qui est lux. Lux enim quoquo modo etiam facit colores qui sunt in potentia colores in actu. Et iste intellectus etiam est abstractus, non mixtus neque passibilis, et est in sua substantia actio. Agens enim semper est nobilius patiente, et principium nobilius materia. Et scientia in actu eadem est cum re. Et quod est in potentia prius est tempore in individuo; universaliter autem non est neque in tempore. Neque quandoque intelligit et quandoque non intelligit. Et cum fuerit abstractus, est illud quod est tantum, et iste tantum est immortalis semper. Et non rememoratur, quia iste est non passibilis, et intellectus passibilis est corruptibilis, et sine hoc nichil intelligitur.”

Aristotle's route to explaining intellection lies in its kinship to sensation.

However, while Aristotle uses sensation as a model for intellection, there are some critical differences that are worth pointing out here. First, the activity of sensation requires the complex of the body and soul together such that the sensitive part of the soul is inseparable from the body and the power of sense operates by way of a bodily organ whereas the intellective part of the soul is itself separable, differing as what is eternal from what is perishable.¹⁹⁴ Second, sensation depends on a movement caused by an external object while the intellective soul requires an internal object and is impassable.¹⁹⁵ Third, Aristotle contends that whereas sensation apprehends individuals, intellection apprehends universals.¹⁹⁶ While these are stark differences, the parallels between sensation and intellection are just as sharp.

Aristotle regards thinking as being a kind of perceiving for he says that in both “the soul discriminates and is cognizant of something which is.”¹⁹⁷ Just as a the sense must be capable of receiving the form of the object that acts upon it, the thinking part of the soul must also be capable of receiving the form, and that means that the thinking part of the soul must be “potentially identical in character with its object without being the object.”¹⁹⁸ Thus, like sensation, intellection is grounded in the metaphysics of actuality and potentiality. All change is governed by form such that what is able to become is that

¹⁹⁴ *De Anima*, 424a24: “Et in quo est ista potentia est primum sentiens,” *De Anima* 413b25-26: “Sed tamen videtur quod hoc sit aliud genus anime, et iste solus potest abstrahi, sicut sempiternum abstrahitur a corruptibili.”

¹⁹⁵ *De Anima*, 416b32-33: “Dicamus igitur quod sentire accidit secundum motum et passionem,” *De Anima*, 417b16-21: Et prima transmutatio sentientis est a generante, ita quod, cum fuerit generatum, statim est sentire etiam, sicut scientia est. Et quod est etiam in actu est simile considerationi Sed tamen differunt, quod agentia in hoc sunt extrinseca, ut visum et auditum, et similiter alia sensibilia, see also *De Anima* 3.5.

¹⁹⁶ *De Anima*, 417b22-23: “Et causa in hoc est, quod sensus in actu comprehendit particularia, scientia autem universalialia, quasi essent in ipsa anima.”

¹⁹⁷ *De Anima* 427a 20-21: “. . .(anima enim in hiis duobus modis iudicat aliquid et cognoscit ipsum) . . .”

¹⁹⁸ *De Anima*, 429a16-17: “Oportet igitur ut sit non passivum, sed recipit formam, et est in potentia sicut illud, non illud.”

which is capable of being formed, of receiving a form. In receiving a form, what existed only potentially, now exists actually. So it is the case with the intellect.

In *De Anima* 3.5 Aristotle distinguishes two powers of the intellect, the power that becomes all things, the possible intellect, and the power that makes all things, the agent intellect. The activity of the possible intellect is pure receptivity. The agent intellect's activity is "making all thing," and Aristotle compares it to light in the sense that light makes potential colors into actual colors.

Throughout *De Anima*, Aristotle emphasizes that all powers of the soul involve the body, the exception being the intellective power. The intellective power is immaterial and inorganic. Thought, Aristotle says is, separable, impassible, and unmixed since it is solely activity. This means that thought operates at the level of form and is not mixed with matter. Moreover, actual knowledge is the same as its object, and what the intellect knows is the form of the object, as Aristotle explains in *De Anima* 3.4:

If thinking is like perceiving, it must be either a process in which the soul is acted upon by what is capable of being thought, or a process different from but analogous to that. The thinking part of the soul must therefore be, while impassible, capable of receiving the form of an object. Thought must be related to what is thinkable, as sense is to what is sensible.¹⁹⁹

Like sensation, intellection requires an object and therefore must be acted upon or receive an object. In sensation the relationship between the sense and the sensible object is not problematic because the sense organ and the sensible object are both material. However, given the immateriality of the intellective power, it cannot be acted upon by that which is material, and therefore requires an immaterial object.

¹⁹⁹ *De Anima*, 429a13-18: "Dicamus igitur quod, si formare per intellectum est sicut sentire, aut patietur quoquo modo ab intellectu, aut aliud simile. Oportet igitur ut sit non passivum, sed recipit formam, et est in potentia sicut illud, non illud. Et erit dispositio eius secundum similitudinem: sicut sentiens apud sensibilia, sic intellectus apud intelligibilia."

Now, Aristotle contends that everything is a possible object of thought. Of those things that involve no matter, thought and what is thought are the same, for example speculative knowledge and its object. Those things that involve matter, however, are able only potentially to be thought and must be disengaged from matter in order actually to be thought.²⁰⁰

Though the intellect is immaterial, and thought is as well, still Aristotle contends that the “soul never thinks without an image.”²⁰¹ Since Aristotle understands the mind as a *tabula rasa*²⁰², as nothing, “pure from all admixture,” until there is actually thought, the intellect is dependent on images, which serve as the contents of perception.²⁰³ These images are of course provided by way of sensation and the imagination and therefore are understood by Aristotle as containing the object of perception. However, sensation and imagination are themselves bodily processes. So, while on the one hand, the intellect has something to think about by way of the image, on the other hand, how intellect accesses the image is problematic since the image being in a material organ cannot act on the intellect. Indeed, Aristotle explains that what the intellect thinks is the form in the images²⁰⁴, but how this occurs is left unspecified.

²⁰⁰ *De Anima*, 430a2-9: “Et est etiam intelligibilis, sicut intellecta. Formare enim per intellectum et formatum per intellectum, in eis que sunt extra materiam, idem sunt. Scientia enim speculativa et scitum secundum hunc modum idem sunt. Et perscrutanda est causa propter quam non semper intelligit. In eo autem quod habet materiam, quodlibet intellectorum est in potentia tantum; istis igitur non erit intellectus (intellectus enim ad ista non est nisi potentia istorum abstracta a materia), illi autem, quia est intellectum.”

²⁰¹ *De Anima*, 431a16-17: “Et ideo nichil intelligit anima sine ymaginatione.”

²⁰² *De Anima*, 429b29-430a2: “Dicamus igitur quod passio, secundum quod prius videbatur, est universalis, et quod intellectus est in potentia quoquo modo intellecta, in perfectione autem non, quousque intelligat. Et quod accidit in intellectu debet currere tali cursu, scilicet sicut tabula est aptata picture, non picta in actu omnino.”

²⁰³ *De Anima*, 431a15: “Et in anima sensibili inveniuntur ymagine secundum modos sensuum.”

²⁰⁴ *De Anima*, 431b2: “Intelligit enim formas per primas ymaginationes.”

Conclusion

The points to be taken from this discussion are as follows. First, Aristotle's cognitive process is framed by his metaphysics of potentiality and actuality at both the level of sensation and the level of intellection such that in each, the process of cognizing the object can be understood as a process of becoming that object in a sense. The faculty of sense is somehow potentially the object and in sensation actually becomes what it was only potentially prior to sensation. The faculty of intellection, likewise, possesses potential knowledge that is actualized in the process of intellection such that actual knowledge is understood by Aristotle as identical to the object of knowledge; when the mind is thinking, it is the objects that it thinks. Second, in sensation the sense is acted upon by an external object; in intellection an internal object must be present to the intellect. Third, the sense apprehends the particular, the intellect knows the universal. Fourth, in sensation the form of the material object is received by the sense without the matter and a likeness or sensible species of the material object in its particularity is produced which becomes the phantasm. The phantasm resides in the internal sense organs and as such is material. Fifth, the intellect never thinks without the phantasm, but the intellect itself does not depend on the body or its organs for its own activities. Sixth, as the intellect requires an internal object, Aristotle conceives the intellect as having a passive or receptive component, the possible intellect and an active component, the agent intellect. Whereas the possible intellect receives a potentially knowable object, the agent intellect shines its light on this object making it actually knowable. The nature of the intellectual process is complicated and needs to be worked through. Aristotle here is careful to distinguish between accidental potency and essential potency. Prior to there

being any object present to the intellect, the intellect is in essential potency to knowledge. After there is an object present to the intellect, the intellect is now in accidental potency, meaning that there is a potentially knowable object present to the intellect, but not yet actually known.

I do not mean to reduce the whole of Aristotle's cognitive project to these six points, but only to indicate those Aristotelian principles which the medieval thinker in embracing the Aristotelian framework had to work through. These issues as will be shown in the following chapters of this dissertation were what accounted for Scotus' cognitive structure but at the same time presented problems that had to be addressed.

The medievalist's understanding of cognition (*cognitio*), as rooted in Aristotle, is not limited to intellectual awareness or activity but includes sensory awareness or activity. Intellectual cognition not only begins with the data provided by sensory cognition but, in accordance with Aristotle, must always be accompanied by the phantasm which is the sensible image produced by the activity of the imagination on the sense data.²⁰⁵ Cognition then includes the whole process from the external senses to intellectual understanding. However, Aristotle observed early in *De Anima* that intellectual activity seems to be the activity of a different kind of soul from the sensitive soul. Thus, he questions whether the intellective soul might be independent from the body, not only in terms of being able to exist separately from the body, but also in terms of whether the intellective activity is an activity that does not depend on the body.²⁰⁶ The medieval thinker having different motivations addresses this same question. This

²⁰⁵ See Kuksewicz 1989, 595; Pasnau 2003, 287; Richard Dumont, "The Role of the Phantasm in the Psychology of Duns Scotus," *The Monist* 49(1965): 617; James South, "Scotus and the Knowledge of the Singular," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 19(2002): 132-133.

²⁰⁶ Kuksewicz 1989, 595.

question of the independence of the intellectual soul or intellective activity leads to another, namely, how can the activity between the sensitive soul and the intellective soul be explained? As I am especially concerned with Scotus' understanding of sensation as a necessary process by which an object is ultimately made present to the intellect (with the help of the agent intellect), how Scotus answers this question needs to be addressed. In this chapter I endeavored to emphasize those elements of Aristotle's thought that I think are especially critical and helpful in understanding Scotus' project. These elements include Aristotle's understanding that the relationship of the soul to body is highly specific as seen in his continued emphasis on describing the characteristics of a body that is ensouled and can therefore carry out the activities of the soul, the homonymy principle which deepens our understanding of the unity of the ensouled being, and the complexities of the claim that sensation involves the reception of the form without matter.

Chapter 2 Informing Theological Notions

The Aristotelian themes discussed in chapter one form the basic structure of Scotus' metaphysics and theory of cognition. However, his theological concerns and beliefs, rooted in his Christian faith, shape his understanding and use of Aristotle's framework. I contend that rather than rendering Aristotle's framework inadequate as the basis of Scotus' account of cognition in which he must address the intellect's natural suitability for the beatific vision as the culminating cognitive experience for the Christian as well as the intellect's cognitive activities in this life, Scotus' theological concerns push the limits of the Aristotelian framework without breaking it. For example, the beatific vision is the face to face vision of the divine essence as it is fully present in its own existence. Such an experience requires that the extramental divine essence be present to the intellect of the blessed. In this life, however, the only objects present to the intellect are internal objects. The intellect, in this life, does not enjoy the direct presence of the external sense object. Though the beatific experience lies outside of the Aristotelian project, the way that Scotus understands the beatific vision informs the way he understands the cognitive activities in this life, including sensation, in such a way that problems that arise in understanding Aristotle's project can be addressed.

In this chapter, I discuss those theological issues that I see as critically important to Scotus in terms of his cognitive project. These theological issues include the nature of the divine essence as the object that ultimately perfects the human intellect, the nature of the beatific vision as the moment that defines the most perfect relationship between the knower and known, and the doctrine of the incarnation which reveals for Scotus the dignity of the material object, a dignity that reflects the unity of the divine essence, and

thus makes the material object a worthy cognitive object in itself. This chapter is divided into three parts. In part 2.1 I discuss the divine essence, in part 2.2 I discuss the beatific vision, and in part 2.3, I discuss the incarnation. I conclude this chapter with a brief summary that emphasizing the critical issues..

2.1 The Divine Essence

The divine essence cannot be known by the human intellect *pro statu isto*, in this life, where the human being is a wayfarer. That this is the case is certainly not unique to Scotus, but the question whether this conditional limitation of the wayfarer is to be answered theologically, for example, as punishment for sin, or to be answered philosophically, for example, by the natural correspondence found between the intellectual power of the soul and the sensitive power of the soul in the process of cognition, is not a question to which Scotus offers a definitive answer.²⁰⁷ Scotus' concern lies in the question of the intrinsic capacities, i.e., the natural powers, of the human intellect, which are not defined by the conditional limitations imposed upon it *pro statu isto* but rather by its nature as an intellect. Allan Wolter points out that Scotus

²⁰⁷ *Quodl.*, 14.44 [12]: “Et hoc saltem concedere debet Theologus, qui ponit istum statum non esse naturalem, nec istam impotentiam intelligendi, respectu ultorum intelligibilium, esse naturalem sed paenalem.” Throughout this dissertation, all English translations of the *Quodl.* passages will be taken from Felix Alluntis and Allan Wolter, *God Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1975). I will provide the Latin text, taken from Ioannis Duns Scoti, O.F.M., *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*. de editione L. Wadding. (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1950). The first numbers that I indicate are the section numbers given by Alluntis and Wolter 1975, the bracketed numbers are from the Wadding text. I have chosen to cite the *Quodlibetal Questions* in this way because Alluntis and Wolter's numbers give a more clear and direct citation of particular passages. That Scotus allows for the possibility that the wayfarer state is imposed upon the human being as a penalty of sin is clear. Scotus, however, does not thereby understand the wayfarer state as something to be dismissed or to treat as if there is no natural harmony between the soul and the body. See Allan Wolter, “Duns Scotus on the Natural Desire for the Supernatural,” *New Scholasticism* 23 (1940): 281-317. Wolter discusses Scotus' response to Augustine where he argues that to permit the intellectual soul, in this life, to function in complete independence of the senses, would destroy the harmony and unity of man's psychic life. (293)

contends that “an intellectual power rooted in a spiritual nature, be it a pure angelic spirit or the soul-form of a body, is incapable of being limited to a certain sphere of objects by an intrinsic limitation.”²⁰⁸ Since Scotus contends that whatever one intellect can know, any intellect can know, any limitation that constrains the human intellect in this life is extrinsic, not intrinsic.²⁰⁹ So Scotus is interested in understanding the natural capacities of the intellect as such and makes these capacities the ground of his cognitive theory.

Scotus does embrace the Aristotelian claim that, in this life, knowledge begins with sensation as well as Aristotle’s dictum that the intellect must have recourse to the phantasm in order to know.²¹⁰ It is for this reason that the human intellect in this life is unable to cognize the divine essence, for as will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter, the divine essence is known by the human intellect only through a face to face vision. Such an encounter demands the immediacy of the object as it is present and existing in itself. In the Aristotelian framework, the intelligible object is made present to the intellect by way of the phantasm, an image based on the activity of sensation. The intellect’s object is also abstract, that is, an intelligible form or universal. What the beatific vision requires, however, is the unmediated presence of the divine

²⁰⁸ Wolter 1940, 292. Wolter observes that this is the reason why Scotus objects to the division of cognitive faculties in Aquinas (*Summa*, I, 85, 1).

²⁰⁹ *Quodl.* 14.43 [12]: “. . . tamen obiectum adaequatum intellectui nostro ex natura potentiae non est aliquid specialius obiecto intellectus Angelici, quia quicquid potest intelligi ab uno, et ab alio.”

²¹⁰ *Quodl.* 7.30 [11]: “. . . quia non est sibi possibilis ex naturalibus nisi conceptus, qui potest causari virtute intellectus agentis, et phantasmatum: nihil enim aliud est naturaliter movens intellectum viatoris de lege communi. . .” See also, *Ord.* I, d. 3, pars, 3, q. 1, n. 392: “Quod additur de Philosopho quod <<speculamur ‘quod quid est’ in phantasmatis>>, etc., - pro omnibus talibus auctoritatibus dico quod talis est conexio istarum potentiarum phantasiae et intellectus pro statu isto, quod nihil intelligimus in universali nisi cuius singulare phantasmatur, nec est alia conversio ad phantasmata nisi quod intelligens universale imaginatur eius singulare.” See Robert Pasnau, “Cognition,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 285-311, in particular p. 299; Allan Wolter, *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1946), 59.

essence, present and existing in itself.²¹¹ The point to be taken here is that the human intellect, once free of the limitations of the wayfarer, can in fact know the divine essence, if God so wills it, and this means that the capacity to know the divine essence already intrinsically exists in the human intellect and is not something that the human intellect must acquire later.²¹²

The claim that the divine essence can be known by the human intellect is supported by Scotus' complex metaphysical system which, while an integration of theological and philosophical principles, is made solid through intricate philosophical argument.²¹³ Underlying this system are Scotus' claims (a) that being is the primary object of the intellect, (b) that being is univocal to God and creatures, and (c) that the ground of being is the ground of knowing. I will discuss each of these briefly in order to establish a groundwork for the more specific discussion of the divine essence.

²¹¹ *Quodl.* 7.22 [8]: “. . . quia etsi cognitio abstractiva possit esse non existentis, aequae sicut et existentis, tamen intuitiva non est nisi existentis, ut existens est.” See also *Quodl.* 6.18-19 [7-8]: “. . . et ad intelligere principii postest satis proprie dici abstractivum quia abstrahit obiectum ab existentia et non existentia praesentia et absentia. Alius autem actus intelligendi est quem tamen non ita certitudinaliter experimur in nobis possibilis tamen est talis qui scilicet praecise sit obiecti praesentis ut praesentis et existentis ut existentis.” As I discuss both in this Chapter and in Chapter 4, the beatific vision requires intuitive cognition. I give a detailed discussion of intuitive and abstractive cognition in Chapter 4. For discussions on Scotus' theory of intuitive cognition see Sebastian Day, *Intuitive Cognition: A Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Press, 1947); Stephen Dumont, “Theology as a Science and Duns Scotus's Distinction between Intuitive and Abstractive Cognition,” *Speculum* 64 (1989): 579-99; Pasnau 2003; Tachau 1988, 68-81.

²¹² *Quodl.* 14.4 [2]: “Anima humana, etsi in quocunque statu, sive scilicet naturae institutae, sive destitutae, sive restitutae, habeat eandem perfectionem naturalem.” Scotus also explains that unless the intellect had the natural ability to know the divine essence, it could not be so elevated. See *Quodl.* 14.41 [12]: “Nec valet dicere, quod elevatur per lumen gloriae. Nullus enim habitus elevans potentiam potest habere obiectum, quod transcendat primum obiectum potentiae, quia ille habitus non esset illius potentiae: sed vel esset in se potentia, vel faceret potentiam esse aliam ab ista; sicut haberet aliud obiectum primum.” See Wolter 1940. Wolter here shows how Scotus understands all knowledge to be natural to the human intellect, including the beatific knowledge. What makes the beatific vision supernatural is the agent that causes it is not a natural cause of the intellect.

²¹³ See Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3-14; Stephen Dumont 1989; William E. Mann, “Duns Scotus on Natural and Supernatural Knowledge of God,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 238-262.

First, (a), Scotus argues that the primary object of the human intellect is being.²¹⁴

Two things here need to be understood, namely, the meaning of the notion of primary object, and how being qualifies as a primary object. I will take up the former first. As the primary object of the human intellect, being is that object that is most suited to the intellect; being is the intellect's *primum obiectum adaequatum*.²¹⁵

To be adequate means to be “properly proportioned or commensurate” to the power in question, which is, in this instance, the power of intellection.²¹⁶ An adequate object is the primary or proper object of a faculty of the intellect as such.²¹⁷ Allan Wolter explains that the notion of an adequate object, for Scotus, contains at least two distinct requirements: (1) it must be able to motivate the intellect and (2) it must be formally or virtually coextensive with whatever the intellect is able to know.²¹⁸

In terms of the first requirement, (1), motivation, Wolter explains that the act of motivating is an act by which the object is able to elicit from the faculty, here, the intellect, “an awareness of itself both as to its formal content and its virtual implications.”²¹⁹ Scotus clearly says that in this life the object that moves the intellect is the quiddity of the sensible object.²²⁰ But the quiddity of the sensible object is not the adequate object of the intellect as such, that is, without the limitations of the wayfarer.²²¹

²¹⁴ Oxon. I, d. 3, q. 3 “. . . dico quod primum objectum intellectus nostri est ens. . .” (Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Allan Wolter (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 4.

²¹⁵ *Quodl.* 14.46 [13]: “. . . quod ens non tantum limitatum, sed ilimitatum sit obiectum naturaliter motivum intellectus creati, et ita ens ut est indifferens ad utrunque, erit obiectum adaequatum naturale, sicut per actionem causae naturaliter agentis attingibile.” See also Pasnau 2003, 294; Wolter 1946, 71-77.

²¹⁶ Wolter 1946, 71.

²¹⁷ Wolter 1946, 59.

²¹⁸ Wolter 1946, 74.

²¹⁹ Wolter 1946, 71.

²²⁰ *Quodl.* 14.43 [12]: “Dico igitur, quod obiectum naturale, hoc ex naturaliter attingibile adaequatum intellectui nostro, etsi por statu isto sit quidditas rei materialis,” *Oxon.* 1. d. 3, q. , n. 24; IX, 148b: Primum objectum adaequatum sibi in movendo pro statu isto sit quidditas rei sensibilis. See also Wolter 1946, 74.

²²¹ Scotus offers several reasons to show that this is the case including the fact that we form concepts that are more universal than the sensible quiddity as well as the fact that we have a science of metaphysics

The second requirement from above, (2), the adequate object is that which is formally or virtually coextensive with whatever the intellect is able to know, means that when any object is known fully by the intellect, then everything that can be known about the object is actually known.²²² The adequate object of the human intellect is that object which exhausts the natural power of the intellect, such that the intellect continues searching until fully satisfied by the object.²²³

Scotus makes a further distinction in regards to the ways in which an object is adequate to a faculty. An object is adequate to a faculty either in terms of the primacy of virtuality or the primacy of commonness.²²⁴ The example of the primacy of virtuality is God's knowledge of his essence. The divine essence is the object that motivates the divine intellect such that when God knows his essence he knows all that is virtually contained in his essence.²²⁵ An example of the primacy of commonness would be color as the object of sight. Color is a common concept or *ratio* that can be predicated of all sensible objects capable of motivating sight.²²⁶ The object that is adequate then, is that object which naturally motivates the intellect and towards which the intellect is inclined, and is therefore, coextensive with its power.

which for Scotus is a science of being qua being and the transcendentals, those entities that transcend the sensible order. See Wolter 1946, 74.

²²² *Quodl.* 14.2 [1]: “. . . potentia non impedita, sed suae naturali perfectioni relicta, potest cognoscere quodcunque contentum sub suo obiecto, primo, sive adaequato,” *Oxon.* 1, d. 3, q. 3, n. 5; IX, 98a: “. . . habet primitatem adaequationis. . . propter virtualitem, quia scilicet virtualiter continet omnia in se *per se* intelligibilia. . .” see also Wolter 1946, 72. In Chapter 4 of this dissertation I will discuss more specifically Scotus' understanding of the distinction between perfect and imperfect intellectual knowledge based on his discussion in question 14 of the *Quodl.*. In my discussion I will again return to the notion of the adequate object of the intellect and especially that which is able to represent that object in its complete intelligibility to the intellect.

²²³ *Quodl.* 6.22 [9]: “. . . nullus intellectus, nec etiam voluntas in aliquo obiecto perfecte quietatur, nisi sit in o tota plenitudo primi obiecti. . .”

²²⁴ Wolter 1946, 72.

²²⁵ Wolter 1946, 72.

²²⁶ Wolter 1946, 72.

I turn now to the question of being as the adequate object of the intellect. Scotus claims that being is the adequate and primary object of the intellect because in being there is both the primacy of commonness and the primacy of virtuality:

For whatever is of itself intelligible either includes essentially the notion of “being” or is contained virtually or essentially in something else which does include “being” essentially.²²⁷

Scotus further contends that all primary intelligibles, for example, genera, species, individuals, the essential parts of genera, the ultimate differences in some of these, as well as the Uncreated Being, include being quidditatively.²²⁸ With regard to the intelligible elements of these primary intelligibles, that is, the qualifying concepts of the ultimate differences and proper attributes, being is included virtually.²²⁹ Thus, being is shown to be the adequate and primary object of the intellect because anything that is intelligible either includes being essentially, commonly, or is contained virtually in that which does include being essentially. The point to be taken here is that since being is the adequate object of the intellect, any object is intelligible insofar as it is.

In the case of (b) the claim is that being is univocal to God and creature. The grounds for this claim are found in the discussion of (a) above where Scotus contends that being is included quidditatively or commonly in all genera, species, individuals, the essential parts of genera, and the Uncreated Being. Scotus offers two arguments in support of this claim that being is predicated commonly of created and uncreated being.

The first argument rests on the fact that the intellect can be certain about the being of an

²²⁷ *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3: “Nam omne *per se* intelligibile aut includit essentialiter rationem entis, vel continetur virtualiter, vel essentialiter in includente essentialiter rationem entis.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 4.

²²⁸ *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3: “Omnia enim genera et species et individua et omnes partes essentials generum et ens increatum includunt ens quidditative. Omnes autem differentiae ultimate includuntur in aliquibus istorum essentialiter.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 4.

²²⁹ *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3: “Omnes autem passiones entis includuntur in ente et in suis inferioribus virtualiter.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 4.

object while at the same time be in doubt about delimiting differences.²³⁰ For example, Scotus claims that he can be certain that God is a being while remaining uncertain about whether he is infinite or finite, created or uncreated.²³¹ Indeed, that we have uncertainty regarding such differences presupposes, for Scotus, a prior certainty.

The second argument that he offers in support of the claim that being is univocal to God and creatures follows from the reasoning that God cannot be naturally known unless being is univocal to God and creatures. In the same way, the human intellect does not know substance or its essential parts, form and matter, except by way of being commonly predicated of substance and accident:

We can argue in the same way of substance and accident, for substance does not immediately move our intellect to know the substance itself, but only the sensible accident does so. From this it follows that we can have no quidditative concept of substance except such as could be abstracted from the concept of an accident. But the only quidditative concept of this kind that can be abstracted from that of an accident is the concept of being.²³²

It is precisely because being is univocal or common to substance and accidents that we can have a concept of substance at all or even know the essential parts of substance,

²³⁰ *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3: “. . . de quocumque enim praedictorum conceptuum quidditativorum contingit intellectum certum esse ipsum esse ens, dubitando de differentiis contrahentibus ens ad talem conceptum.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 5.

²³¹ *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, n. 6; IX, 18a: “. . . sed et intellectus viatoris potest esse certus de aliquo quod sit ens, dubitando de ente finito vel infinito, creato vel increato.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 49.

²³² *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3: “. . . ita potest argui de substantia et accidente; cum enim substantia non immutet immediate intellectum nostrum ad aliquam intellectionem sui, sed tantum accidens sensibile, sequitur quo nullum conceptum quidditativum poterimus habere de ea nisi aliquis talis possit abstrahi a conceptu accidentis. Sed nullus talis quidditativus, abstrahibilis a conceptu accidentis est nisi conceptus entis.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 5. Scotus goes on to explain that anything that is capable of moving the intellect when it is present, cannot so move the intellect in its absence. Thus, if the intellect is not so moved, then it knows that the object is absent. “. . . quia quicquid praesens immutat intellectum illius absentia potest naturaliter cognosci ab intellectu, quando non immutatur. . .” *Ibid.* The problem is that in transubstantiation the accidents of the bread remain when the substance of bread is no longer there. If substance were able to move the intellect then in its absence the intellect would naturally know that it was no longer present. But this is not the case in transubstantiation. I point this out now but will discuss it later in more detail.

namely, form and matter.²³³ Or to put it differently, from the fact that we have a concept of substance, which we cognize indirectly through the sensible accident, we are able to reason towards that which commonly underlies subject and accident such that from the knowledge of one we can arrive at the knowledge of the other. Being is precisely that which underlies the subject and accident. It is predicated univocally, commonly, of both. In the same way being is predicated univocally of God and creature. The point to be taken here is that Scotus at once founds and makes intelligible his system through his understanding of being. Since being is univocal to the created and uncreated, it is a common foundation that comprehends all that Scotus wants to include: the whole range of created beings and the Uncreated being. In this claim of univocality then Scotus makes available all that is, all that partakes of being, to the intellect.²³⁴

Before concluding this discussion on the univocality of being, it is appropriate here to discuss briefly how Scotus conceives of metaphysics, his understanding of essential order, especially that between the infinite and the finite, and the nonmutual relationship between God and creatures. The reason that it is important to discuss these notions here is that while I do think the claims made at the end of the last paragraph in regard to the univocality of being are strong and far reaching, I want to indicate the limits within which Scotus is working.

Following Aristotle, Scotus is in agreement with other Scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas, as well as thinkers such as Avicenna, that the subject of metaphysics is

²³³ *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 3: “Et ita nihil cognoscetur de partibus essentialibus substantiae, nisi ens sit commune univocum eis et accidentibus.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 6.

²³⁴ Wolter 1946, 12.

being qua being.²³⁵ Thus, metaphysics is a science that deals with the nature and existence of God, and as Scotus explains, is a transcending science for it is concerned with the transcendentals.²³⁶ To understand how metaphysics is a science of transcendentals and to appreciate the nature of transcendentals themselves, it is helpful first to consider Scotus' concerns about the nature of being prior to its division into the ten categories of Aristotle and the concepts that can be formally predicated of God. As already established in the above discussion, Scotus contends that being can be univocally predicated of the created and the Uncreated. However, this is not to be understood as suggesting that there is a mutual relationship between God and creatures.²³⁷ God always transcends every order since God's being is always of a different order. So Scotus contends that being, before divided into the ten categories of Aristotle, is first divided into infinite and finite.²³⁸ That there is such a disjunction between the infinite and the finite is based on a universal rule whereby given the positing of the less perfect extreme

²³⁵ *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle (QMA)* Bk. 6, q. 4, 10: "Tenetur ergo Avicenna. . . Ergo si aliqua scientia supponeret istum conceptum pro subiecto, alia esset prior de ente quae probaret primitatem de ente, quia conclusio demonstrationis illius esset prior tota scientia de primo ente." The Latin text that I use is: B. Ioannis Duns Scoti, *Quaestiones Super Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, ed. R. Andrews, G. Etzkorn, G. Gal, R. Green, F. Kelley, G. Marcil, T. Noone, R. Wood (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, 1997). The English translation I use is: John Duns Scotus, *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle by John Duns Scotus*, trans. Girard J. Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, St. Bonaventure University, 1998). All English translations cited in this dissertation are by Etzkorn and Wolter. See also John F. Wippel, "Essence and Existence," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 390. As the subject of metaphysics is being, it treats of the nature of God as well as to prove his existence, see Wolter 1946, 162; According to Richard Cross, the goal of metaphysics is God's existence, see Cross 1999, 15.

²³⁶ *Quaestiones subtilissimae in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*, prol., n. 5: "Necesse est esse aliquam scientiam universalem, quae *per se* consideret ila transcendentia, et hanc scientiam vocaus metaphysicam, quae dicitur a meta, quod est trans, et physis scientia, quasi transcendens scientia, quia est de transcendentibus." *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 2.

²³⁷ Allan Wolter, "Commentary on the De Primo Principio of Duns Scotus," in *John Duns Scotus, A Treatise on God as First Principle*, trans. and with commentary by Allan Wolter (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), 165.

²³⁸ *Oxon.* I, d. 8, q. 3: "Respondeo: ens prius dividitur in infinitum et finitum quam in decem praedicamenta. . ." *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 2.

of some being is posited, it can be concluded that the more perfect extreme is realized in some other being.²³⁹ Thus, to posit the finite being of the creature is to be able to posit the infinite being of God. This disjunction between the infinite and the finite is an example of an essential order.

An essential order here means that the prior must exist simultaneously with the posterior, i.e., the members related by an essential order must coexist.²⁴⁰ Moreover, the posterior member is always imperfect.²⁴¹ Based on the definition of an essential order that Scotus gives in the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Wolter explains that an essential order “stems from the very nature or essential constitution of a thing rather than from something incidental to it.”²⁴² In the question on the existence of God, Scotus discusses in more detail the nature of an essential order. He explains that an essential or *per se* cause is a cause which naturally produces its effect.²⁴³ Peter King explains that a cause is an essential or *per se* cause if “its effect is a *per se* object of its causal power,” i.e., the *per se* cause produces its effect “by its own nature.”²⁴⁴

Scotus distinguishes essentially ordered causes from accidentally ordered causes in three ways: 1) In essentially ordered causes, the second cause depends upon the first in its own causal activity, 2) In essentially ordered causes the higher cause is more perfect, 3) All essentially ordered causes are simultaneously required to produce the

²³⁹ Wolter 1966, 164.

²⁴⁰ Wolter 1966, 165.

²⁴¹ Wolter 1966, 165.

²⁴² *Quodl.* 19.19 [5]: “Ordo essentialis est *per se* inter essentias.” See also Wolter 1966, 165.

²⁴³ *Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 1: “. . . et est causa *per se* quae secundum naturam propriam. . .” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 40.

²⁴⁴ Peter King, “Scotus on Metaphysics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40.

effect.²⁴⁵ King uses the example of a builder, who in the activity of building is the *per se* cause of the house. If in building the house, however, the builder causes traffic congestion in blocking roads where building houses, this traffic congestion is only accidentally caused rather than essentially.²⁴⁶

The point that I want to emphasize here is a point that Wolter makes, namely, that the essential order between disjuncts like infinite or finite, contingent or necessary, prior or posterior, substance or accident, to name but a few that Scotus mentions, adds to the intelligibility of his system without denigrating either extreme, and this is due to the nature of essential order.²⁴⁷ The essential order coheres together Scotus' metaphysical system. For example, God, as infinite being, is absolutely different from the creature in its finite being. God as prior is perfect, creature as posterior is imperfect. The point is that the essential order that exists between the infinite and the finite lessens their extreme radicality. I can now turn to a discussion of the transcendentals.

Being is the first of the transcendentals.²⁴⁸ The transcendentals are real concepts that can be predicated commonly of God and creatures, prior to the division of the categories.²⁴⁹ As a real concept the transcendental refers not to the conceptual order but to the metaphysical order of reality.²⁵⁰ In themselves the transcendentals are indifferent to the distinction of infinite and finite. As they apply to God they are infinite, as they apply

²⁴⁵ *Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 1: "Prima differentia est, quod in *per se* ordinatis secunda in quantum causa dependet a prima, . . . Differentia secunda est, quod in *per se* ordinatis est causalitas alterius rationis et alterius ordinis, quia superior est perfectior, . . . Tertia est, quod omnes causae essentialiter et *per se* ordinatae simul necessario requiruntur ad causandm, alioquin aliqua causalitas essentialis et *per se* deesset effectui. . ."

²⁴⁶ King 2003, 40. For a detailed discussion of Scotus' use of essential order see King 2003, 40-42; Cross 1999, 16-18.

²⁴⁷ Wolter 1966, 163.

²⁴⁸ Wolter 1946, 10.

²⁴⁹ Wolter 1946, 7.

²⁵⁰ Wolter 1946, 7.

to creatures they are finite. Scotus does not limit the transcendentals to being, one, true, and good, but extends the definition to:

whatever pertains to being, then, insofar as it remains indifferent to finite and infinite, or as proper to Infinite Being, does not belong to it as determined to a genus, but prior to any determination, and therefore, as transcendent and outside of any genus.²⁵¹

In other words, the transcendentals are all notions that can be predicated commonly of God and creatures or predicated of God alone, and transcend the categories.²⁵² The point that should be taken here is that Scotus endeavors to show and account for, how that which is, is fully available to the intellect.

To sum up the points of these discussions (a) that being is the primary object of the intellect and (b) that being is univocal to God and creature, I turn to what Scotus claims in his *Quodlibetal Questions*, “What is ground for being is also ground for knowing.”²⁵³ Based on the previous discussions this means at least three things for Scotus. First, being is the guarantee of the object’s intelligibility. Second, whatever is knowable in the object can be known by the intellect. Third, whatever one intellect can know, any intellect can know.²⁵⁴ These three points will now guide the discussion on the divine essence.

In Question 1 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* Scotus directly considers the nature of the divine essence. He attends first to the definition of terms, among them, essence.²⁵⁵ He first asserts that “in the divine there must needs be some real entity, which is there by

²⁵¹ *Oxon.* I, d. 8, q. 3: “Ergo quaecumque conveniunt enti ut indifferens ad finitum et infinitum, vel ut est proprium enti infinito, conveniunt sibi non ut determinatur ad genus sed ut prius, et per consequens, ut est transcendens et est extra omne genus.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 2.

²⁵² Wolter 1946, 9.

²⁵³ *Quodl.* 5.28 [11]: “. . . quia quod est ratio essendi, est ratio cognoscendi. . .”

²⁵⁴ *Quodl.* 14.43 [12]: “. . . quia quicquid potest intelligi ab uno, et ab alio. . .”

²⁵⁵ *Quodl.* 1.4 [2]: “Videatur ergo primo intellectus istorum quatuor terminorum, qui ponuntur in titulo quaestionis, scilicet essentia, essentiale, notionale, et immediatias.”

the very nature of things and is actually existing.”²⁵⁶ This is so because unless there were some being that is “real, first, unique,” and which “requires no prior entity,” none would be first nor would there be a posterior.²⁵⁷ It is, then, this real entity that is the essence of God.²⁵⁸

Scotus is guided in his discussion here by Augustine’s arguments in *De Trinitate*, “The name ‘essence’ is derived from ‘to be;’”²⁵⁹ ‘to be’ in Latin is “esse.” Essence is rooted in being and is, therefore, that which concerns the being of an entity in the most proper way such that: “God is most truly called “essence” to whom “to be” belongs most properly, and truly.”²⁶⁰ Guided still by Augustine, Scotus writes:

. . . so that perhaps God alone should be called essence. For he is truly unique, because incommunicable, and he revealed this as his name to Moses his servant when he said: ‘I am who am.’²⁶¹

God is what he is in himself absolutely and does not derive his being or essence in relation to another. His essence is the formal reason of his being. The formal reason of his being could not be a relational term such as ‘Father.’ God’s true nature and name derives from what he is in himself, and therefore, from his essence which is most properly his being.

²⁵⁶ *Quodl.* 1.5 [2]: “. . .in divinis necessario est aliqua entitas realis,sive ex natura rei, et hoc in existentia actuali. . .”

²⁵⁷ *Quodl.*, 1.5, [2]: “. . . semper erit ibi ponere de necessitate aliquam entitatem realem, primam, unicam, quae non praexigat aliquam priorem. Si enim quaelibet praexigeret priorem, nulla esset prima, et per consequens nec aliqua alia esset posterior.”

²⁵⁸ *Quodl.* 1.6 [3]: “Ista realis entitas, quae est in Deo, cum sit prima ratio essendi simpliciter: rationabiliter a Sanctis vocatur essentia.”

²⁵⁹ *Quodl.* 1.6 [3]: “. . . quod est esse, appellatur essentia.” Augustine, *De Trinitate*, VII, c. 4, n. 9: PL 42, 942; CCSL 50, 260.

²⁶⁰ *Quodl.* 1.6 [3]: “Manifestu est Deum abusive vocari substantia ut nomine visitatori intelligatur essentia, quod vere ac proprie dicitur.”

²⁶¹ *Quodl.* 1.6 [3]: “. . . ita, ut fortasse solu deo oporteat dici essentiam. Est enim vere solus, quia incommutabilis, idque nomen suum suo famulo enunciait Moyse cum dixit: Ego sum, qui sum,” Augustine, *De Trinitate*, VII, c. 5, n. 10: PL 42, 942; CCSL 50, 261.

Scotus endorses Damascene's claim: "Of all the names given to God, the main one is that of 'He who is.'"²⁶² Scotus' favorite way of thinking about the essence of God in the *Quodlibetal Questions*, as shown by often he makes reference to it, is the metaphor of an infinite sea of being, borrowed from Damascene: "For like some infinite and limitless sea of substance, he contains all being in himself."²⁶³ Scotus uses this metaphor to explain the nature of God's essence:

Therefore, essence is not just that first entity which is somehow distinct from the essentials, but is one complete entity which unitively contains all the essentials. The very term "sea" seems to imply this, because of the immensity of what the sea contains unitively.²⁶⁴

The image of the sea expresses at once the infinitude and simplicity of the divine essence, for Scotus contends that what is infinite cannot itself be made up of parts.²⁶⁵

Scotus next turns his attention to the nature of pure perfection, a notion that he borrows from Anselm. Scotus claims that the divine essence is "that which includes all that is pure perfection."²⁶⁶ A pure perfection is, according to Anselm, "something it is better for anything to have than to have what is not it, i.e., to have anything incompatible with it."²⁶⁷ Scotus' notion of the supremely perfect being is that being which can have

²⁶² *Quodl.* 1.7 [3]: "Videtur quidem principalium omnium, qua de Deo dicuntur nominum, esse qui est." Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* I, c.9: PG 94, 835, Buytaert ed., c.9, 48-49.

²⁶³ *Quodl.* 1.7 [3]: "Totum enim in se comprehendens habet esse velut quoddam pelagus substantia infinitum, et interminatum." Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* I, c.9: PG 94, 835; Buytaert ed., c. 9, 48-49.

²⁶⁴ *Quodl.* 1.8 [4]: "Non ergo essentia est praecise ista prima entitas distincta qualitercunque contra essentialia: imò est una totalis entitas unitivè includens omnia essentialia, cui videtur concordare illud vocabulum, quod dicit, Pelagus propter immensitatem continentiae unitivè."

²⁶⁵ See Cross 1999, 29-30, for a discussion on the divine simplicity. Infinitude for Scotus is most important in terms of the divine essence, and he shows that that which is an infinity cannot be made up of parts. In this way too, the metaphor of the sea works well.

²⁶⁶ *Quodl.* 1.9 [4]: "...ergo essentia divina est talis entitas, includens unitive omnem perfectionem simpliciter." Translated by Alluntis and Wolter 1975, *God and Creatures*, 8.

²⁶⁷ *Quodl.* 5.20 [8]: "...probat per rationem perfectionis simpliciter, quia enim ipsa est melior in quolibet, quam non ipsa. . ."

every pure perfection.²⁶⁸ His proof is that anything supremely perfect can lack no pure perfection otherwise it would not be supremely perfect. But no pure perfection is incompatible with another pure perfection because if such an incompatibility existed between two pure perfections, that would mean that one would be better than the other, and vice versa. Such circularity is impossible, Scotus contends, because then “one and the same thing would be less perfect than itself.”²⁶⁹ So God as a supremely perfect being is replete with every pure perfection. Infinity is a pure perfection that the divine essence enjoys and is of critical importance to Scotus.

Scotus rejects Aristotle’s claim that there is no actual infinite. According to Aristotle, “The infinite is that whose quantity is such that no matter how much one removes from it, there is always more for the taking.”²⁷⁰ Such an understanding of infinite precludes perfection because it is only potentially infinite, as Scotus explains, “For this reason, no matter how much is removed, what one takes will still be finite and will represent only a certain part of the infinite potential whole.”²⁷¹ In other words, Aristotle’s infinite is not actual, never whole, never complete and therefore in lacking wholeness, lacks perfection.

In *Quodlibetal Questions* 5.6 Scotus changes Aristotle’s notion of the potentially infinite in quantity to that of “quantitatively infinite in act,” by which he imagines that “all parts that could be taken were taken at once or that they remained in existence

²⁶⁸ *Quodl.* 5.20 [8]: “...quod possibile est omnem perfectionem simpliciter per identitatem haberi in summe perfecto.”

²⁶⁹ *Quodl.* 5.20 [8]: “...quia tunc idem esset imperfectius seipso.”

²⁷⁰ *Quodl.* 5.5 [2]: “*Est cuius quantitatem accipientibus, id est, quantumcunq; accipientibus, semper aliquid restat accipere.*” *Physics* 3.6, 207a7-9.

²⁷¹ *Quodl.* 5.5 [2]: “...et ideo quantumcunq; accipiatur illud non est nisi finitum, et quaedam pars totius infiniti potentialis...”

simultaneously.”²⁷² Rather than each part being actualized in succession, Scotus argues that it can be conceived that all the parts are actualized all at once. This allows him to conceive of the supremely perfect being as the supremely infinite being, “an infinite being that cannot be exceeded in entity by any other being” and therefore “will truly have the character of something whole and perfect. It will indeed be whole and complete.”²⁷³

The metaphor of Damascene’s sea, which captures this wholeness in its immensity and infinitude, guides Scotus’ conception of the infinitude of the divine essence. What must be made clear here is that Scotus understands ‘infinite’ as an intrinsic mode of the divine essence. An intrinsic mode is an essential mode rather than an existential mode.²⁷⁴ An intrinsic mode is a qualification of a subject so identified with it that is “neither really nor formally distinct from it, yet it is possible to conceive of the subject without the mode as a first intention (real concept).”²⁷⁵ Alluntis and Wolter point out that Scotus only ever discusses the intrinsic mode in detail in connection with magnitude.²⁷⁶ Magnitude, as an intrinsic mode, is “the degree of intensity or measure of intrinsic excellence” of a formal perfection like infinity.²⁷⁷ As discussed above, being is first divided into infinite and finite, such that infinite is proper to the Uncreated Being, whereas finite is proper to created being. Infinity is not defined overagainst the finite.

Alluntis and Wolter explain, “Infinity is that mode which transcends every finite mode by

²⁷² *Quodl.* 5.6 [2]: “Ex hoc ad propositum comutemus rationem infiniti in potentia, in quantitate, in rationem infiniti in actu, in quantitate, si posset ibi esse in actu. Si enim nunc necessario semper cresceret quantitas infiniti per acceptionem partis post partem, sic et imaginaremur omnes partes acceptibiles esse simul acceptas vel simul remanere, haberemus infinitam quantitatem in actu.”

²⁷³ *Quodl.* 5.7 [3]: “Si in entibus intelligamus aliquid infinitum in entitate in actu, illud debet intelligi proportionabiliter quantitati imaginatae infinitae in actu, sic ut ens illud dicatur infinito quod potest ab aliquo in entitate excedi: et ipsum vere habebit rationem totius, et perfecti.”

²⁷⁴ Wolter 1946, 154.

²⁷⁵ Alluntis and Wolter, 1975, 518.

²⁷⁶ Alluntis and Wolter 1975, 518.

²⁷⁷ Alluntis and Wolter 1975, 518.

a non-finite degree.”²⁷⁸ For Scotus, any hierarchy of being is a finite order, that is, what separates the beings in the hierarchy is a finite measure. This is, again, because for Scotus, being is either infinite or finite. If being is infinite there is here no hierarchy of beings because there is only one infinite being. Where there is a hierarchy there is only finite being. The infinite is what “exceeds the finite in entity beyond any relative measure or proportion that can be assigned.”²⁷⁹ For Scotus infinity is neither an attribute that accrues externally to the being that is infinite nor is it to be thought in the mode of a coextensive property like good or true are to being. Rather what it expresses is an intrinsic, essential mode of that entity, as Scotus explains:

It is so intrinsic that if we abstract from all its properties or quasi-properties, we have still not excluded infinity, but it remains integrally included in that one single entity itself. Hence if we consider that entity most precisely, namely without any property, it will be true to say it has a measure of intrinsic excellence all its own which is not finite, since any limitation of degree is repugnant to it. Therefore it is infinite. That which is infinite, considered precisely, and not under the aspect of some attributable property such as wisdom or goodness, can also be aligned according to an essential order with something it excels, but its superiority will not be measurable in any definite degree for then it would be finite. Therefore, the intrinsic mode of anything intensively infinite is infinity itself, which intrinsically expresses a being or essence which lacks nothing and which exceeds everything finite beyond any determinable degree.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Alluntis and Wolter 1975, 518.

²⁷⁹ *Quodl.* 5.9 [4]: “Ens infinitum est quod excedit quodcunque ens finitum, non secundum aliquam determinatam proportionem, sed ultra omnem determinatum proportionem, vel determinabilem.”

²⁸⁰ *Quodl.* 5.10 [4]: “... imò infinitas intensiva dicit modum intrinsecum illius entitatis, cuius est sic intrinsecum, quod circumscribendo quodlibet, quod est proprietas vel quasi proprietas eius, adhuc infinitas eius non excluditur, sed includitur in ipsa entitate, quae est unica. Unde de ipsa entitate praecisissime accepta, absque scilicet quacunque proprietate, verum est dicere quod aliquam magnitudinem propriam virtutis habet sibi intrinsecam, et non magnitudinem finitam quia ipsa repugnat sibi: ergo infinitam. Ipsum etiam infinitum: praecisissime acceptum non sub aliqua ratione proprietatis attributalis ut bonitatis, vel sapientiae potest comparari secundum ordinem essentiali ad aliqua, quae excedit, et non secundum aliquam proportionem determinatam, quia tunc esset finitum: intrinsecus ergo modus cuiuslibet infiniti intensive est ipsa infinitas, quae intrinsece dicit ipsam esse, ut nihil deest, et quod excedit omne finitum ultra omnem proportionem determinabilem.”

Allan Wolter explains that for Scotus the infinite or finite disjunction is a transcendental disjunction that divides real being.²⁸¹ Being is either infinite or finite such that the infinitude or finitude indicates whether the magnitude of perfection is unlimited or limited.²⁸² The being that is infinite is infinite precisely because it is infinite being. As infinite being it transcends any finite order. As an intrinsic mode, Wolter explains, infinity is an essential mode that is “bound up with the actually existing perfection.”²⁸³ And it is the case then that “every perfection in God may be said to be formally infinite.”²⁸⁴

The divine essence is supremely perfect and infinite, as such it is the primary and adequate object of the divine intellect, which is itself supremely perfect and infinite. The object that is adequate to any intellect must be a really existing object, present to the intellect, and moreover, is that which perfects the intellect as the act of the intellect. Such an object is known as the beatific object whether Scotus is considering the divine, angelic, or human intellect. The beatific object is that object that

as supreme contains in itself the perfection of all objects and has the power to perfect the intellect. Now the beatific object is that which quiets, satisfies, and perfects the intellect.²⁸⁵

The divine intellect, however, does not have to seek out its object, the divine essence, for its essence is always present to it. God’s beatitude does not require a conceptual relationship between the operation and its object because God’s operation “has a true union or identity with the object.”²⁸⁶ Scotus explains further that the adequate

²⁸¹ Wolter 1946, 11.

²⁸² Wolter 1946, 154.

²⁸³ Wolter 1946, 154.

²⁸⁴ Wolter 1946, 154.

²⁸⁵ *Quodl.* 5.26 [11]: “...quia in perfectissimo obiecto et summe continente omnem perfectionem omnium obiectorum, summe quietatur, et perficitur, et satiatur ipsa potentia, et ita beatificatur.”

²⁸⁶ *Quodl.* 13.51 [16]: “Operatio autem Dei habet cum obiecto veram unitatem, et identitatem,”

object of the divine intellect cannot be “common by way of abstraction from all the objects it knows, but rather one that is common to all *per se* objects by a community of virtue.”²⁸⁷ By knowing the divine essence, God knows all that is contained in the divine essence.

The created intellect does not enjoy such a unity of identity with the beatific object but rather only the unity of relation.²⁸⁸ It follows then for Scotus that the human intellect seeks out and does not rest until it finds that object which perfects it, the divine essence that is whole, complete, and infinite:

For in the most perfect of all objects, which contains in the highest all the perfection of every object, this intellectual power is to the highest degree perfected, satisfied, and quieted, and so beatified.²⁸⁹

To sum up this rather lengthy section, the critical points to be taken are that the primary and adequate object of the human intellect is being, being is predicated univocally of the created and the Uncreated, being is the ground for knowing, and the divine essence as that which has real being, is whole, perfect, and infinite, is that object which perfects the human intellect. The divine essence is the primary and adequate object of the divine intellect. It is the perfect extreme of being. While being is the primary object of the human intellect, it is the perfect and infinite being that perfects it. The human intellect, in its natural capacity, is capable of knowing what is, and what perfectly is.

²⁸⁷ *Quodl.* 5.28 [12]: “. . . intellectus divinus non habet obiectum adaequatum commune per abstractionem ab omnibus obiectis, sed commune communitate virtutis ad omnia per se obiecta. . . ”

²⁸⁸ *Quodl.* 13.51 [16]: “Beatitudo tamen creata necessario requirit relationem ad obiectum, sed realem; et hoc, quia non potest habere maiorem unitatem cum obiecto, quam unitatem relationis.”

²⁸⁹ *Quodl.* 5.28 [12]: “. . . quia in perfectissimo obiecto et summe continente omnem perfectionem omnium obiectorum, summe quietatur, et perfecitur, et satiatur ipsa potentia, et ita beatificatur.”

2.2 The Beatific Vision

Beatitude is both that which motivates and guides Scotus' epistemological endeavors for it is the *terminus ad quem* of the human intellect, and as such informs the whole of Scotus' epistemological project.²⁹⁰ Beatitude is the most perfect community of the knower and the known that the human intellect can attain. In God, this is a perfect unity because there is an identity of the divine intellection and the divine object. In human cognition, this community of the knower and the object is founded on a relation as Scotus explains:

Created beatitude, however, does necessarily require a relationship to the object, and this is a real relation. The reason for this is that the operation can have no greater unity with the object than the unity of a relationship.²⁹¹

It is this relationship between the human intellect and the divine essence that I will now consider. At the beginning of question 13 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*, in which Scotus is concerned about whether the acts of knowing are essentially absolute or relative, he posits that the “ultimate perfection of the living nature is what such a nature desires above all else by natural desire.”²⁹²

To desire is an activity of the will, to know is an activity of the intellect. The will and the intellect are both powers of the soul such that for Scotus there exists only a

²⁹⁰ *Terminus ad quem* literally means the terminus or end to which a process moves towards. *Terminus a quo* (terminus from which) means the initial state or starting point of a process. (Alluntis and Wolter 1975, 537.) I will use the word “*term*” as an abbreviation for *terminus ad quem* in this dissertation.

²⁹¹ *Quodl.* 13.51 [16]: “Beatitudo tamen creata necessario requirit relationem ad obiectum, sed realem; et hoc, quia non potest habere maiorem unitatem cum obiecto, quam unitatem relationis.”

²⁹² *Quodl.* 13.9 [3]: “. . . sed ultima perfectio naturae viventis a tali natura summe desideratur desiderio naturali. . .”

formal distinction between them rather than a real distinction.²⁹³ Simply put, for Scotus, there is no real distinction between the soul and its faculties.²⁹⁴ Although Scotus partially agrees with Bonaventure that beatitude is a joint venture between the will and the intellect, Scotus considers beatitude to be primarily a function of the will.²⁹⁵ The ultimate perfection desired above all else is beatitude which as the final end is “an activity or consists in an operation.”²⁹⁶ It is by way of a cognitive act that there is a vision of the divine essence. That there is enjoyment of the essence is by way of the will. The intellect, by the grace of God, cognizes the divine essence in its presence, and the will loves it.

Thus, Scotus contends that the ultimate perfection of a living nature must have a real relationship to the most perfect object that it is naturally designed to have.²⁹⁷ It is the very nature of beatitude that it “connects or joins the nature with its ultimate end in an unqualified sense, namely with the extrinsic object that beatifies.”²⁹⁸ Thus, Scotus agrees with Augustine that the true definition of beatitude can be expressed as possession: “He alone is blessed who has all he wills and wills nothing wrongly.”²⁹⁹

²⁹³ Cross 1999, 149: “Roughly two realities—two aspects of one thing—are formally distinct if and only if they are both really identical and susceptible of definition independently of each other. Scotus’ criterion for real identity is real inseparability. In fact, real inseparability (such that the real separation of two or more realities is logically impossible) is necessary and sufficient for real identity. Conversely, real separability is necessary and sufficient for real distinction.” I will discuss the formal distinction in more detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation. See also Maurice Grajewski, *The Formal Distinction of Duns Scotus: A Study in Metaphysics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1944).

²⁹⁴ Wolter (1940) 291.

²⁹⁵ Wolter (1940) 283; Cross 1999, 149.

²⁹⁶ *Quodl.* 13.11 [4]: “...et maxime desiderabilem dicunt esse operationem, vel in operatione consistere.”

²⁹⁷ *Quodl.* 13.18 [6]: “...ultima, et summa perfectio naturae operativae non potest esse sine reali relatione ad obiectum perfectissimum, circa quod ipsa nata est operari: operatio autem est summa perfectio talis naturae.”

²⁹⁸ *Quodl.* 13.19 [6]: “Si igitur concedatur beatitudinem creaturae esse accidens illi naturae beatificabili, et cum hoc summam esse eisu perfectionem: hoc non potest poni, ut est aliquid ad se, sed praecise, inquantum connectit, sive coniungit fini ultimo simpliciter, scilicet obiecto extrinseco, quod per ipsum attingitur.”

²⁹⁹ *Quodl.* 13.20 [7]: “Beatus igitur non est, nisi qui habet omnia, que vult, et nihil mali vult;” Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIII, c.5, n. 8: PL 42, 1020; CCSL 50a, 393.

What the intellect naturally seeks out and what the will naturally desires is that most perfect object that, in possessing, perfects the intellect and will. In the beatific vision the intellect knows its object as it exists in itself, for as Scotus understands it, it is a “face to face vision of this object, since the act of knowing it tends to this object as present in itself with its own actual existence.”³⁰⁰

Thus, beatitude requires that there be a real object, that is, an extramental one, for otherwise the intellect would be able to be satisfied with a nonexistent object, which Scotus argues is impossible.³⁰¹ As we saw, Scotus uses Damascene’s metaphor of the sea to ground his understanding of the divine essence. He returns to this metaphor throughout the *Quodlibetal Questions* fully exploiting it not only to reveal the immensity and infinity of the divine essence but also to show its actual existence. In Question 6 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* Damascene is one of the authorities that Scotus appeals to in order to support his claim that “the divine essence *qua* essence has its own real or extramental magnitude,” which he infers from a previous claim that the divine essence has extramental or real existence.³⁰²

Scotus contends that it is always necessary to assume “the existence of some entity which is real, first, unique, and requires no prior entity.”³⁰³ If the existence of such a prior entity is not assumed, there would be no posterior entity.³⁰⁴ Scotus seems here to be appealing again to the law of disjunction between the prior and the posterior. That the

³⁰⁰ *Quodl.* 13.28 [8]: “...de quo dicitur habere claram visionem, sive facialem: propter hoc, quod actus eius cognoscendi tendit in illud, ut in se praesens in propria existentia actuali.”

³⁰¹ *Quodl.* 6.20 [8]: “...et sic beatitudo potest esse in obiecto non existente: quod est impossibile.”

³⁰² *Quodl.* 6.15 [6]: “...scilicet quod ipsa essentia, ut essentia, habet ex natura rei propriam magnitudine.”

³⁰³ *Quodl.* 1.5 [3]: “...semper erit ibi ponere de necessitate aliquam entitatem realem, primam, unicam, quae non praexigat aliquam priorem.”

³⁰⁴ *Quodlibetal Questions* 1.5 [3]: “Si enim qualelibet praexigeret priorem, nulla esset prima, et per consequens nec aliqua alia esset posterior.”

existence of the posterior is posited allows the conclusion that a prior so exists. In any case, in the divine there is real existence.

That Damascene calls the divine essence a sea means for Scotus that it enjoys “a kind of priority and contains primarily all divine perfections,” and is therefore infinite.³⁰⁵ Scotus argues that the essence is infinite extramentally, i.e., really, precisely because the essence is absolutely first.

Reason also shows that this is the case in terms of the nature of infinity as an intrinsic mode of the essence. Since infinity is an intrinsic mode of the divine essence, it follows, Scotus argues, that it only belongs to its subject intrinsically in the real or extramental order.³⁰⁶ It is the case that a being of any absolute quiddity is either intrinsically finite or infinite. But since it has already been shown that the divine essence is infinite it cannot be finite. Its infinity is real just as the divine essence is extramental.

Since beatitude is a face to face vision, it requires a real object. The divine essence is such for Scotus. But a face to face vision is accomplished by intuitive cognition, that is, a cognition of the object that is present as present and the existing object as existing.³⁰⁷ Beatific knowledge cannot be abstractive because abstractive knowledge is indifferent to the existence or non-existence of its object.³⁰⁸ And so Scotus defines beatitude in terms of cognition as an intuitive knowing where the “beatific object

³⁰⁵ *Quodl.* 6.15 [6]: “...quod essentia est Pelagus quoddam substantiae infinitum, et interminatum: essentia, ut saepe dictum est, dicitur ab eo Pelagus quoddam quasi prioritatem, et prima comprehensionem habens omnium; et ut sic, secundum ipsum, est infinita et interminata: sic ergo est infinitas est essentiae, ut essentia.”

³⁰⁶ *Quodl.* 6.16 [6]: “...quia, sicut declaratum est in quaestione praecedente, infinitas intensiva non dicit proprietatem, vel passionem eius, cuius est: sed modum intrinsecum eius; circumscripta etiam quacunquē proprietate: nulli ergo potest convenire, nisi cui ex natura rei intrinsece convenit.”

³⁰⁷ *Quodl.* 6.19 [8]: “...scilicet praecise sit obiecti praesentis, ut praesentis: et existentis, ut existentis,” “intellectio potest proprie dici intuitiva: quia ipsa est intuitio rei, ut existentis, et praesentis.”

³⁰⁸ *Quodl.* 6.0 [8]: “. . .quia abstractiva est aequae existentis, et non existentis.” See also Stephen Dumont 1989, 579-599.

is reached immediately and in itself.”³⁰⁹ For Scotus, this claim means that the beatific act “is necessarily an intuition of its object” such that “it is knowledge of that object as existing and present in its own existence. . . indeed in its real existence as something present.”³¹⁰

Scotus further contends that the intellect cannot be perfected or “be perfectly satisfied by any object unless it contains the full plenitude of its first object, that is to say, unless its primary object finds its highest possible expression in that object.”³¹¹ But such plenitude can only be infinity. Thus, Scotus concludes that any power capable of beatitude requires an object that is infinite. Infinity then is the “*per se* condition of any object that is fully satisfying and therefore beatific.”³¹² The human intellect, then, is must be understood in such a way that it will not rest but will “push on farther” (*imo potentia ulterius inclinatur*) until it knows its ultimate object which is itself infinite.³¹³ The intellect is geared toward the infinite. The nature of the wayfarer is not simply metaphorical or merely theologically driven but is an apt description of the human intellect that constantly seeks to go beyond even what it may understand as its own limits. To be a wayfarer is to be on a journey, but a journey takes place in time, one place to the next, moment by moment. The journey of the wayfarer is fragmented by time. The intellect in the state of the wayfarer does operate under certain conditions, namely, that knowledge begins with the senses and that the intellect has recourse to the phantasm in

³⁰⁹ *Quodl.* 6.20 [8]: “. . . ipsum obiectum beatificum immediate in se attingatur . . .”

³¹⁰ *Quodl.* 6.21 [9]: “. . . quia si actus beatificus est necessario intuitivus ipsius obiecti: ergo est eius, ut existentis, et in existentia propria praesentis: ergo omnis conditio, quae est obiecti per se beatifici, est eius per se, ut in existentia reali, imo, ut in ipsa reali existentia praesentis.”

³¹¹ *Quodl.* 6.22 [9]: “. . . nullus intellectus, nec etiam voluntas in aliquo obiecto perfecte quietatur, nisi sit in eo tota plenitudo primi obiecti,”

³¹² *Quodl.* 6.22 [9]: “. . . infinitas est per se conditio obiecti quietativi: et ita beatifici.”

³¹³ *Quodl.* 6.22 [9]. Alluntis and Wolter 1975, 137 translate “*imo potentia ulterius inclinatur*” as the activity of pushing on farther.

order to know. While Scotus certainly does not see these limitations as intrinsic to the intellect, he does not necessarily regard them negatively. That is to say, while they do in fact constrain the intellect, they cannot ultimately change the nature of the intellect.

This is an important point for at least two reasons. First, Scotus is obviously interested in maintaining and understanding the psychic unity of the soul in this life. Second, since the intellect as such is ultimately perfected by the most perfect infinite object, the divine essence, in this life this capacity remains an intrinsic capacity of the intellect, though certainly not realized. Still, it speaks to how the intellect tends to its object, be it the divine essence or the sensible object in this life. Certainly, the sensible object is not an infinite object as it is a finite being, but it is endowed with “haecceity,” a positive principle that determines it to an individual that is repugnant to further division, and thus, is itself a unity over and above the number of its parts.³¹⁴ What Scotus offers here is the true finite disjunct to the infinite. The infinite is that which is utterly indeterminable. The finite is that which is utterly determined. Scotus’s understanding of the sensible object as non-repeatable individual affords the intellect an object that it can truly tend towards.

To sum up this section, the most important point to be taken is the nature of the beatific vision as that moment in which the intellect cognizes in a face to face vision that object which perfects it precisely as it is infinite. Such a vision requires that the intellect be capable of intuitive cognition, knowing an object immediately as it is present and

³¹⁴ Haecceity is a term that denotes the individuality of a particular being. Haecceity is a Latin term that means “thisness.” As Wolter explains, haecceity is “a positive entity or formality over and above the specific nature possessed by an individual.” Wolter explains that haecceity is a characteristic of all created being, substances and accidents alike. Haecceity fully determines as an individual that is repugnant to further division. See Wolter 1946, 105. Scotus rejects the claim that matter is the principle of individuation. In Chapter 3, when I examine Scotus’ understanding of unity, I will discuss this principle of individuation in more detail.

existing. This face to face vision of the divine infinite object, I claim, is the basis of Scotus' contention that the sensible object endowed with haecceity is intelligible in itself. While it is the case that Scotus rejects that haecceity can be known in this life, still, because we experience objects as individuals and our intellect intrinsically tends towards the infinite, the sensible object is a worthy object of study.

2.3 The Incarnation

For the Christian thinker in the Latin West, the moment of the incarnation is of critical importance and inspiration. While it is certainly a theological notion, it plays a role in Scotus' understanding of the material world. What is of interest to me is how the incarnation informs Scotus' thought and perhaps gives him access to material reality from a different vantage point. In the way that only that which is other or that which lies outside of a framework is capable of bringing forth the reflective capacity, the incarnation unsettled Aristotelian logic and categories for they are unable to comprehend such an event where the divine becomes human. Scotus modifies Aristotle's system for his own project, and in doing so, he allows theological notions like the incarnation to reveal a world that the Aristotelian system cannot. I will extend here the argument that I began in the last section on the beatific vision.

The nature of the beatific vision revealed the nature of the human intellect as that which is intrinsically capable of cognizing the divine essence, indeed, as an intellect that tends towards, seeks out, and is perfected by the infinite object. Such an intrinsic capacity is not changed by an extrinsic limitation, merely temporarily constrained. The point being that the intellect naturally seeks out and tends toward the infinite. The

opposite extreme of the infinite is the most specialized species, the fully determinate individual. The intellect is naturally equipped, if not to fully cognize the individuality of the object, to appreciate it and to push farther into knowing it. But is the object worthy of such care and concern? Certainly it is the case for the beatific object. But I argue that it is also the case for the material object by way of Scotus' understanding of the incarnation. It is this understanding that gives him the vantage point of loving the object, thus realizing even the material object as something capable of being studied and worthy of being attended to. Certainly one could argue that Aristotle goes a long way in rescuing the material object from the status of appearance that Plato gives it. Whereas for Plato the material object is but an appearance or copy of the form, subject to change, and unintelligible in itself, Aristotle gives intelligibility to the material object by placing the form in it and explaining it by way of the categories of being and the four causes. The material object is what it is in relation to the system and workings of nature. And while this goes a long way to appreciating the object in its own existence, the material object is still ultimately understood as an individual in the species. The principle of individuation is matter according to Aristotle. While Thomas Aquinas follows Aristotle on this point, Scotus, as seen above, contends that there must be a positive principle other than matter that is the principle of individuation.³¹⁵ Scotus argues that matter cannot account for the individuality of the object nor account for its unity.

It is the backdrop of the incarnation that gives Scotus the space to look at the object in a new way. To show how this is the case, I will draw extensively from the profound reading of Scotus' understanding of the incarnation that Louis Mackey presents

³¹⁵ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* q. 85, a. 1. For an English translation see Anton Pegis, *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: The Modern Library, 1945), 401.

in his chapter, “The Theological Circumstance of Scotist Speculation,” as well as from Richard Cross’ works, *Duns Scotus* and *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*. I will attend to Mackey’s argument first.

Mackey points out that while most theologians, including Aquinas, understood the incarnation as “God’s response” to the sinfulness of humanity, Scotus joined a minority tradition that rejected the notion that the incarnation was “mandated by the fall” of human beings.³¹⁶ In fact, the way Scotus sees it, according to Mackey, is that the incarnation was “immediately intended by God as an end from all eternity.”³¹⁷

Mackey lists the logical order of divine previsions, that is, God’s fore-ordained knowledge:

- 1) God knows himself as the highest good;
- 2) he knows all the things that are to be created;
- 3) he predestines some to grace and glory;
- 4) he foresees those that are to fall in Adam; and
- 5) he preordains or foresees their redemption through the passion of his Son.³¹⁸

Mackey points out that though in the above logical order the redemption comes after the fall, what is important is that the glorification of the human being (3), is prior to the sin of the human being. The human being is already destined to glory before she sins. It is because she is destined for glory, that is, already endowed with a capacity for glory, that

³¹⁶ Louis Mackey, “The Theological Circumstance of Scotist Speculation,” in *Peregrinations of the Word* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 182. See also Cross 1999, 127-128. Cross makes the same observation as Mackey, i.e., that Scotus is part of a minority tradition that rejects the notion of the incarnation as mandated by the fall. Cross points out that Aquinas held that incarnation was the result of the fall, (127) but also that there was a clear minority tradition, that is interesting in its own right and the variety of reasons that motivated the various thinkers within this tradition held that held otherwise, beginning with Rupert of Deutz (c. 1075-1129) and including Alexander of Hales who is motivated by Pseudo-Dionysius’ Plotinian notion of the self-diffusiveness of the good (128). Cross points out that while Scotus agrees with this minority tradition, he has “strikingly” different reasons for doing so.

³¹⁷ Mackey 1997, 182.

³¹⁸ Mackey 1997, 182.

she is able, even can be, redeemed. In the same way, that which is loved is already able to be loved. Scotus explains:

Christ in the flesh, just like all the elect, was foreseen and predestined to grace and glory before the passion of Christ was foreknown a medicine against the fall.³¹⁹

In fact, Mackey observes that for Scotus, the fall of humanity is not the cause of the predestination of Christ, rather, Christ “would have been predestined to be the Son of God even if rational creatures had not fallen, “even if,” Scotus says, “none were to have been created save Christ himself.””³²⁰ Mackey emphasizes that there is a divine order based on divine love, love being a center-post of Scotus’ decidedly Franciscan understanding of reality:

- 1) God first loves himself;
- 2) he loves himself in others;
- 3) he wills to be loved by another who is able to love him supremely;
- 4) he wills the union with himself of that nature that ought to love him supremely, even if no one falls; and
- 5) after the fall, he foresees the mediator coming to suffer and to redeem his people.³²¹

It is the case that Christ comes as mediator and sufferer in response to the sin of humanity, but Christ as a whole, body and soul, is already glorified. He is already glorified because it is his nature to love supremely God and thereby be in union with God.

These two lists that Mackey offers are meant to show Scotus’ motivations. The first motivation concerns the liberty of God, an important claim of Scotus. Certainly, Mackey argues that the only way to make sense of the suffering of Christ is the fall. Still,

³¹⁹ Mackey 1997, 182.

³²⁰ Mackey 1997, 183.

³²¹ Mackey 1997, 183.

God does not act in a constrained way but rather from “an absolutely original intention of the divine will.”³²² Mackey explains this divine intention eloquently:

Occasioned by our lapse, it was not coerced thereby. Comprehending sin, it was simply a more comprehensive reaffirmation of the primordial volition. Having willed to assume and glorify our humanity, God also willed the cost of its reparation. Christ’s passion is not a concession to sin but the projection through sin of the original divine ordinance of incarnation. It follows not from the fall—nothing follows from sin except the death of the sinner—but from the gracious liberty of God.³²³

The liberty of God is not the only motivation that emerges from a study of the above lists.

The second motivation is grace. God creates freely, but if, as Mackey has observed Scotus as saying, “the incarnation is effected in the divine will prior to the creation,” then “the world is sacralized from the beginning.”³²⁴ The way Mackey understands this is that the

divinization of the creature precedes its making: *deificari* anticipates *creari*. . . since the grace of the sanctifying union goes before the gratuity of creation and motivates it, the order of nature is subsumed into the order of grace from all eternity.³²⁵

What this means is that since the incarnation was preordained prior to the fall as an end, it informs the teleological structure of the created world as a world that is already capable of being loved, of being glorified. Again as Mackey contends, the world for Scotus was “created in order that the union of the creature with God . . . might be realized in and for the creature.”³²⁶ The incarnation is the point of, as well as the beginning and end, all created things. The incarnation reveals not only the divine essence but also the essence

³²² Mackey 1997, 183. This also seems to be clearly in line with Scotus’ understanding that an intrinsic capacity cannot be changed by something extrinsic.

³²³ Mackey 1997, 183.

³²⁴ Mackey 1997, 183-184.

³²⁵ Mackey 1997, 184.

³²⁶ Mackey 1997, 184.

of the created object. Mackey reads Scotus as contending that “the purpose of the creation is the full manifestation and accomplishment of the Incarnation.”³²⁷

Cross shows that Scotus offers an argument based on natural reason that concludes that the incarnation would have happened irrespective of the Fall of Adam.³²⁸

The two principles that Scotus uses to reach this conclusion are:

- (a) In any well-ordered action, the end is willed before the means;
- (b) In any well-ordered action, a greater good is willed before a lesser one.³²⁹

Based on these two principles, Cross claims that Scotus establishes the following order in God’s actions:

1. God predestines Christ’s soul to glory.
2. God predestines Christ’s human nature to depend on the Word.
3. God predestines some other creatures to glory.
4. God foresees the Fall of Adam.
5. God predestines Christ to redeem fallen humanity.³³⁰

Cross argues that the order of the above divine actions is based on the two principles (a) and (b).³³¹ For example, God must have predestined Christ’s human nature before any other nature because the glory of Christ’s human nature is a greater good than the glory of any other nature. In like manner, Cross works out fully the above order. What is interesting in Cross’s argument is not only that he shows that Scotus uses natural reason to support his theological claim that the Incarnation was pre-ordained before the fall, but also that Cross observes that this argument “ties in neatly with his [Scotus’] relatively

³²⁷ Mackey 1997, 185.

³²⁸ Cross 1999, 128.

³²⁹ Cross 1999, 128. Scotus, *Ord.* 3, 7, 3, n. 3 (Wadding, 7:202).

³³⁰ Cross 1999, 128.

³³¹ Cross 1999, 128.

lowly view of unfallen humanity.”³³² Cross had earlier pointed out that Scotus’ account of original sin is much weaker than Augustine’s, and moreover, the supernatural gifts lost in the fall by humanity were minimal, and, thus, their loss “has only the smallest effect on human existence.”³³³

In sum, the points to be taken from this discussion on the incarnation is that the incarnation for Scotus is not a response to the fall but something pre-ordained by God. Thus, in terms of the argument that Mackey offers, what clearly emerges is the worthiness of the created world. That the world can be redeemed means that it is intrinsically capable of being so redeemed. Thus, the act of redemption is not something that is an external act to the world for as such it could not have redeemed the world. The point is, for Scotus, that the world is already capable of being loved, and is therefore, worthy of being attended to as a cognitive object. In terms of the argument that Cross makes, the point to take is that the order of the incarnation prior to the fall of man is a rational order.

Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by emphasizing that the nature of the divine essence, the nature of the beatific vision, and the incarnation guide Scotus in his cognitive project. Scotus is interested in the intellect and its object, both at the level of the natural capacity of the intellect and the object, and at the level of the wayfarer. The theological notions reveal the natural capacity of the intellect and its object. This in turn reveals how the intellect seeks out and attends to the object in this life, constrained by limitations, but not

³³² Cross, 1999, 129.

³³³ Cross, 1999, 83.

changed by them. Moreover, the material object, according to the argument concerning the incarnation, is an object capable of being loved, intelligible in itself, worthy in itself of attention.

In Chapter 1, the fundamental framework and principles of the Aristotelian framework were discussed in order to show the structure of Scotus' cognitive theory. In chapter 2, critical theological concepts that influence Scotus' cognitive theory were discussed in order to emphasize the critical concerns that Scotus has in working out his cognitive theory. While the discussion in this chapter pertains most directly to the natural capacities of the intellect and the object that ultimately perfects it, it sheds light on the nature of the intellect and its object *pro statu isto*. Three critical claims of Scotus emerged. First, while the intellect in this life is constrained, its ultimate nature is unchanged. Second, Scotus does not view the dependence of the intellect on the senses in a negative way but rather observes that there is a harmony and unity in the human being's psychic life. Third, the beatific vision requires the presence of the divine essence to the intellect itself, and thus, the intellect is intrinsically capable of attending to the presence of an object. This third claim is important because, while in this life the intellect enjoys only the presence of an internal object, it nonetheless fully capable of attending to the presence of an extramental object. This is not only the case due to the beatific vision, but also as will be shown, because the intellect as a superior cognitive faculty is able to know whatever the inferior faculty is capable of, that is, the sense faculty's knowledge. Not only is the intellect capable of attending to a present object, it requires the presence of an internal object, and thus, in this life, requires the activity of

the senses. Thus, the relationship between the sense faculty and the intellectual faculty comes front and center as what both informs and underlies Scotus' cognitive project.

Chapter 3 The Relationship of the Soul to the Body

The aim of this chapter is to examine how Scotus understands the relationship of the soul to the body. This relationship is the framework by which and in which cognition, both sensitive and intellective, occurs in this life. What complicates understanding the nature of this relationship, and thus how cognition works in this life, is that the body is material and the soul is immaterial. Materiality and immateriality are complex and not easily defined and thus further complicate this issue. Given the immateriality of the soul and the materiality of the body, the unity of the human being comes into question not only in terms of how to account for the wholeness of the particular human being, but in terms of her own cognitive activities which require such an underlying unity. Since the aim of this dissertation is to show how Scotus understands how the immaterial intellect is able to act with the material phantasm in cognition, it is critical to show how Scotus understands the body-soul relationship as it is this relationship that makes possible the activity of the intellect with the phantasm. This chapter is divided into five parts. In part 3.1, I examine Scotus' complex and profound understanding of unity with the aim of making clear that unity which is proper to the human being. In part 3.2, I discuss the unity of the human being giving particular attention to the problematics of Scotus' claim that within this unity exists a plurality of substantial forms.³³⁴ In part 3.3, I turn to Question 9 in the *Quodlibetal Questions* where Scotus considers the nature of the substantial or informing form, and I use this question to frame an extensive discussion of

³³⁴ Richard Cross, "Philosophy of Mind," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 272. Cross points out here that Scotus is of course not the only medieval thinker to claim that there is a plurality of forms in the animate composite. That there exists a plurality of forms is the standard line of thinking held by the majority of later thirteenth century thinkers.

the following three notions: *per se* being, the nature of the accident, and the immateriality of the intellective soul. In part 3.4 I offer a particular reading of Scotus' claim that the human being, due to her intellectual nature, is a person. I propose here that the notion of person is that which best comprehends and guarantees the unity of the human being. I conclude this chapter with some critical remarks that both serve to summarize the main points of this chapter and to introduce the discussion of sense cognition in chapter four.

3.1 Unity

Scotus understands unity or “the one” to be that which is indivisible in itself and divided from all else.³³⁵ Unity is one of the transcendentals, those attributes of being prior to the division of being into infinite and finite, and is therefore co-extensive with being.³³⁶ Posterior to this division of infinite and finite being, uncreated and created being, there are different grades of being, and, thus, different grades of unity such that each grade of being has its own proper unity.³³⁷ Wolter explains that the most perfect grade or form of transcendental unity, that which is most deservedly called unity, is the unity of singularity (*unitate singularitatis*), that unity exhibited in the ultimate reality of

³³⁵ Wolter 1946, 103; Scotus, *Oxon.* 4, d. 6, q. 1, n. 4; XVI, 532a: “Unum est in se indivisum, et ab alio divisum.”

³³⁶ Scotus, *Oxon.* 1, d. 7, q. 3, n. 2: “Hoc patet ex alio: quia ens non tantum habet passiones simplices convertibiles, sicut unum, verum, et bonum,” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 3. See also Wolter 1946, 100; Louis Mackey, “Singular and Universal” in *Peregrinations of the Word* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 161.

³³⁷ Wolter 1946, 103; Scotus, *Oxon.* 2, d. 3, q. 4, n. 6; XII, 95a: “Quamlibet enim entitatem consequitur propria unitas.” See also, *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 63[9]: “sicut unum convertitur cum ente, ita omnis modus unius cum aliquo gradu entis cui est proprius ille modus.” *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 131[19]: “Cuicumque enim gradui reali entitatis correspondet realis unitas.” See also Mackey 1997, 162.

the individual being, and this singularity is a numerical unity.³³⁸ Numerical unity, Wolter explains, is a real attribute that “expresses a formal perfection of the individual.”³³⁹

As a point of contrast to the unity of singularity, there is the unity that Wolter calls a “unity of kind,” a unity that exists between individuals that share a common nature (*natura communis*).³⁴⁰ Influenced by Avicenna, Scotus argues that the common nature, really in individuals, is itself indifferent to singularity or universality, “horseness is just horseness.”³⁴¹ The common nature is less than numerical, less than the unity of singularity which properly designates the existing individual as such.³⁴² As Wolter explains it, the common nature is “prior by nature to any determination.”³⁴³ But, it is the unity of singularity that is itself somehow “coextensive with all real being” and, thus, is

³³⁸ Wolter 1946, 102-104; Scotus, *Oxon.* 1, d. 23, q. un., n. 2; X, 259a: “Unitas est passio entis, sicut patet 4 *Metaph.* Et per consequens consequitur rem ex natura rei. Et maxime esset verum de illa unitate, quae est vera unitas, cuiusmodi est unitas individui.” See also *QMA* bk 7, q. 13, 27[4]. Scotus here defines what it means to be numerically one: “quia ‘unum’ cuilibet convenit secundum propriam rationem, sicut ipsum est terminus creationis.”

³³⁹ Wolter 1946, 104.

³⁴⁰ Wolter 1946, 104, Mackey 1997, 161.

³⁴¹ Scotus, *Rep Par.*, 2, 12, 5, no. 11; Vives, XXIII, 30b: “Modus ponendi est Avicennae 5 *Metaphys.* Cap. 1. *Equinatas est tantum equinitas*, hoc est, es se non habet hoc esse singulare, nec esse universale; sed natura potest habere esse sub universalitate, ut in anima, et potest habere majorem unitatem realem quam specificam; ideo neutrum est es se, ...” as quoted in Owens, Joseph, “Common Nature: A Point of Comparison Between Thomistic and Scotistic Metaphysics,” *Mediaeval Studies* 19, 1-14. See also Scotus, *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 64[10]: “Omne ens reale, secundum quod tale, habet unitatem aliquam realem. Quia licet albedo secundum se non sit una numero vel plura –secundum Avicennam, V *Metaphysicae*—nec sic una ita quod unitas sit intra quiditatem, tamen albedo secundum se est unum aliquid. Sed natura, secundum quod natura, est vere ens reale. Ergo est unum aliqua unitate reali; non unitate individui, quia tunc omnis unitas realis esset numeralis, quia tam illa quae est naturae quam illa quae est suppositi.” See also, *Oxon.* 2, d. 3, q. 1, n. 7. For other pertinent discussions on the common nature see Mackey 1997, 161; Noone, Timothy B. (2003) “Universals and Individuation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 109; Perler, Dominik, (2003) “Duns Scotus’s Philosophy of Language,” *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, 168-169.

³⁴² *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13 61[9]: “Et sic videtur quod natura non est haec de se, quia cuiuscumque propria unitas realis est minor unitate numerali, illud non est de se unum unitate numerali, sive non est sufficiens causa talis unitatis, sive non est de se hoc. Sed naturae in isto propria unitas realis est minor unitate numerali. Ergo natura in isto de se non est haec.” See also, *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13 64[10]: “Sed natura, secundum quod natura, est vere ens reale. Ergo est unum aliqua unitate reali; non unitate individuali, quia tunc omnis unitas realis esset numeralis, quia tam illa quae est naturae quam illa quae est suppositi.”

³⁴³ Wolter 1946, 107.

the highest expression and realization of unity.³⁴⁴ It is important to understand fully the unity of singularity as it is the standard by which all other kinds of unity are measured.

The unity of singularity, for Scotus, is that unity that is impossible to be divided further. It expresses the ultimate reality of the individual and is realized in Scotus' notion of "haecceity" which is his principle of individuation.³⁴⁵ Scotus does not often use the term "haecceity," but he understands by it that which ultimately accounts for the unity of the individual. In a discussion in book 7, question 13 of the *QMA*, Scotus gives his argument.

The individual is that which is "not divisible into many, and is distinguished from all others according to number."³⁴⁶ Scotus explains that this means that to be divided into subjective parts is repugnant to the individual, and this repugnance can be accounted for only by something in the individual.³⁴⁷ One of the proofs that he offers for this is based on his contention that the division into subjective parts is an imperfection and, therefore is not found in God.³⁴⁸ From this, Scotus concludes, a repugnance to being divided into subjective parts is due to a perfection in the individual.³⁴⁹ Haecceity is just such a perfection for Scotus conceives of haecceity as a positive nature that makes something intrinsically one that is whole and perfect of itself.³⁵⁰ Since being and unity are coextensive, an individual being exists insofar as it remains a unity. Haecceity, together

³⁴⁴ Wolter 1946, 104.

³⁴⁵ Wolter 1946, 104.

³⁴⁶ *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 115[17]: ". . . illud quod non est divisibile in multa, et distinguitur ab omni alio secundum numero."

³⁴⁷ *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 116 [17]: ". . . quod sibi repugnat divisio in partes subiectivas. Haec repugnantia non potest esse nisi per aliquid quod inest individuo."

³⁴⁸ *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 116 [17]: ". . . dividi in partes subiectivas est imperfectionis, unde removetur a Deo."

³⁴⁹ *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 116[17]: "Ergo hoc nulli repugnat nisi propter perfectionem aliquam in ipso."

³⁵⁰ *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 119 [17]: "Quid ergo est istud [illud in individuo per quod sibi repugnat divisio in partes subiectivas tales] in a [individuum]? Non negatio. . . Si datur haec negatio 'non posse' etc., quaero etiam de causa negationis datae, et sic semper quousque stes in natura positiva pro causa. . . Item, individuum est verissime ens et unum, sicut arguitur hic de prima substantia."

with the common nature, accounts for the individuality of the particular being.³⁵¹

Mackey explains that, for Scotus, the individual must be understood as the “negation of the “dividual” (dividuum).”³⁵² Thus the unity of singularity is a unity of indivision, and Mackey understands this to mean, in a Scotistic positive sense, integrity or a “fully determinate and irrefragable uniqueness.”³⁵³ The most perfect expression of unity is that which can neither be determined further nor divided further. Thus, unity is not simply negative, indivision, for Scotus; the unity of singularity is a perfection that is to be understood positively as a fully determined and complete wholeness.

Based on the coextension of unity with being, Scotus distinguishes at least six different degrees of unity: (1) the unity of a collection or aggregate, (2) the unity of order, (3) the unity of accident, (4) the unity of a composite, i.e., substantial unity, (5) the unity of simplicity, and (6) formal identity.³⁵⁴ In addition to these six degrees of unity, Richard Cross also identifies a seventh, the unity of homogeneity.³⁵⁵ Scotus organizes this list from lesser to greater unity. Thus, as he points out, the unity of order is greater than the unity of a collection, and so on. An example of a unity of a collection is a heap or a bundle, a series of efficient causes is a unity of order, a white man is an accidental

³⁵¹ *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 131 [19]: “Sicut tamein aliis unitive contentis non est separatio realis, nec etiam possibilis, sic natura, cui intellectus tribuit intentionem speciei quae dicta est esse in re et communis—sicut commune est possibile in re—, numquam separatur ab illa perfectione unitive secum contenta vel ab illo gradu in quo accipitur differentia individualis [haecceitas].” *QMA* bk. 7, q. 13, 132 [20]: “Per hoc patet ad tertium argumentum: contradictio includitur quod separetur, propter unitivam continentiam.” Haecceity is also called the individual difference and Scotus explains that while haecceity and the common nature can be conceived of separately, in reality they cannot be separated; they are formally distinct.

³⁵² Mackey 1997, 167.

³⁵³ Mackey 1997, 167.

³⁵⁴ *Oxford Commentary on the Four Books of the Sentences*, Book 1, dist. 2, q. 7, I am using the translation by James J. Walsh in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1973), 623; *Ordinatio*, 1. 2. 1-4, n. 403. See also Richard Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 7.

³⁵⁵ Cross 1998, 7. The first 8 chapters of this text offer a detailed discussion of each of these types of unity.

unity, a human being is a substantial unity, and the human soul is a unity of simplicity.³⁵⁶

As this chapter concerns the unity of the human person, I will examine here in more detail, the unity of accident, the unity of substance, and the unity of simplicity.

The accidental unity results from the union of an accident and a substance, like white and man. Following Aristotle, Scotus understands that the accident qualifies the substance in some way. What is of import to this discussion is how Scotus understands the accident itself and the manner of its relationship with a substance. Scotus understands the accident itself as a singular thing, an entity that is individuated independently of the subject to which it is united.³⁵⁷ Richard Cross points to a passage in the *Ordinatio* in which he contends that Scotus explicitly claims that an accident is to be understood as an individual item:

In every categorial hierarchy there can be found something intrinsically individual and singular of which the species is predicated—or at least there can be found something not predicable of many.³⁵⁸

Cross also quotes a passage from the *Quodlibetal Questions* where he explains that Scotus is less explicit but nonetheless supports this same claim:

In the second sense of this first member [i.e. ‘being’ or ‘thing’ taken in its broadest sense], however, we say a thing is what can have entity outside the soul.³⁵⁹

In both of these passages it is clear that the accident as that which exists as a category and also as that which exists extramentally can be understood as a singular, individual thing.

When it is united to a substance which is itself an individual, it is a unity of two

³⁵⁶ Cross 1998, 7.

³⁵⁷ Cross 1998, 94-100.

³⁵⁸ Cross 1998, 95; *Ordinatio*, 2. 3. 1. 4, n. 90. Cross’ translation.

³⁵⁹ Cross 1998, 95; *Quodl.* 3.10 [2]: “In secundo autem membro, istius primi membri, dicitur res quod habere potest entitatem extra animam.” Cross’s translation.

individual things that is somehow greater than the unity of collection or aggregate. How is this possible?

In terms of the manner of the relationship of accident to substance, according to Cross, Scotus modifies Aristotle's distinction between substance and accident. As discussed in Chapter 1, accidents are distinct from substances because, whereas according to Aristotle, substances exist in themselves, accidents exist in another. Cross argues that Scotus replaces this Aristotelian distinction with the notion of inherence. Cross contends that an accident, for Scotus, is an entity that has a natural tendency to inhere in a substance; a substance has no such natural tendency.³⁶⁰ Inherence is what explains how an accidental unity thus differs from the unity of a collection.

A substantial unity exists where there is a composite made of that which is intrinsically actual, form, and that which is intrinsically potential, matter.³⁶¹ A material substance is made up of prime matter and a substantial form.³⁶² Scotus does not understand prime matter as pure potentiality, but rather, in order to account for substantial change which requires that some basic stuff remain constant, Scotus claims that matter has an actuality all its own, that is, has its own properties, its own nature.³⁶³ Matter, for Scotus, can exist (theoretically) and be understood independently from form. Both matter and form are essential parts of the material substance.³⁶⁴ Indeed, every

³⁶⁰ Cross 1998, 104. I will discuss in much more detail later in this chapter the notion of inherence.

³⁶¹ *Oxford Commentary on the Four Books of the Sentences*, translated by Walsh (1973), 623.

³⁶² Cross 1998, 77.

³⁶³ Cross 1998, 13-33. Cross explains in detail that Scotus contends that Aquinas' view of matter as pure potentiality reduces matter to the non-existent (17) such that matter only exists when united to form (18). Thus, according to Cross, Scotus sees in Aquinas that matter is reduced to form, and this Scotus does not accept. See Scotus, *QMA*, bk. VII, q. 5 where Scotus asks whether matter is a being and explains that matter is that in which the potency of receiving actuality exists and as such is presupposed in order to receive. See also, Cross 1998, 13-33; B. M. Bonansea, B.M. (1983) *Man and His Approach to God in John Duns Scotus* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 13; Mackey 1997, 163.

³⁶⁴ Cross 1998, 26.

essence or quiddity is made up of matter as such and form as such, whereas, the individual substance is made up of this matter and this form.³⁶⁵

A substantial form as one essential part of a material substance is itself an individual, that is, for Scotus, the substantial form is individuated independently of the prime matter to which it is united and is individuated independently of the composite of which it is a part.³⁶⁶ While Aquinas, too, understands form as an individual, form is not an individual in its own right, rather it is by way of its instantiation in matter that it is individuated.³⁶⁷ That Scotus understands that the substantial form is an individual in its own right amounts, Cross contends, to a rejection of Aquinas' understanding of form, and therefore of the notion of form simply as the structure of matter.³⁶⁸ Cross argues that Scotus recognizes that form understood as the structure of matter is not enough to explain how different structures of matter yield different sorts of material substances.³⁶⁹ Scotus understands form as playing an explanatory role; it must explain how a particular substance is a natural kind.³⁷⁰ Scotus sees the substantial form as an individual that has an essence and thus certain essential properties.³⁷¹ Moreover, the substantial form is the formal cause of the composite of which it is a part. Rather than inhering in matter, Scotus understands the substantial form to inform matter.³⁷² The substantial form

³⁶⁵ Cross 1998, 32-38.

³⁶⁶ Cross 1998, 34-35. *Ordinatio 2* .3.1.5-6, n. 187

³⁶⁷ Cross 1998, 34-35. Aquinas, *ST* 1.50.2 c.

³⁶⁸ For a discussion of form as structure of matter, which is a view held by Richard of Middleton, see Cross 1998, 35-37. Ultimately Cross thinks that form as structure is not enough to do the metaphysical work that Scotus means it to do.

³⁶⁹ Cross 1998, 37.

³⁷⁰ Cross 2003, 272.

³⁷¹ Cross 2003, 272.

³⁷² I will be discussing this in greater detail in section 3.3 where I offer a detailed reading of question 9 in the *Quodl.*.

naturally tends to be a component part of a composite.³⁷³ When an accident inheres in a substance, the substance is qualified in some way; when a form informs matter, it communicates actuality to matter such that a new individual substance comes into being that is “an absolute entity really distinct from all its parts.”³⁷⁴

Scotus understands this new absolute entity, this material substance as a whole over and above its component parts. Richard Cross offers a detailed analysis of Scotus’ views on material substance in which he delineates four conceptions of material substance, all of which Scotus ultimately rejects: material substance is not identical to its parts, it is not a mere aggregate of its parts, it is not an aggregate of matter and form, and it is not the aggregate of matter, form, and the relation between them.³⁷⁵

Since Scotus recognizes a relation as a thing, Cross contends that Scotus is committed to the claim that a relation of two things “adds some further entity over and above the absolute parts.”³⁷⁶ The substantial unity or unity of the composite has properties different in kind from the properties of its parts.³⁷⁷ The wholeness of the material substance accomplished by the substantial unity is not reducible to its parts. It is a whole new entity with its own form, the form of the whole. In the *QMA* Scotus considers the nature of the form/matter composite:

First, we can think, without any contradiction, of matter side by side with form, each existing in itself and there would be no composite. Or to put this in another way,--according to Bk. VII near the end—the composite has some cause of its unity in itself that does not stem from just having [matter and form] as its part—which parts though of as non-united can be understood to exist in themselves without contradiction. Therefore, from

³⁷³ Cross 1998, 40.

³⁷⁴ Cross 1998, 86.

³⁷⁵ Cross 1998, 78. For all the arguments that Scotus makes for each of these four see pp. 77-86.

³⁷⁶ Cross 1998, 87.

³⁷⁷ Cross 1998, 91.

the end of Bk. VII, there is something in the composite besides matter and form, whereby it is one.³⁷⁸

Here Scotus refers to Aristotle's explanation of the syllable "ba" such that it is not simply its components, "b" and "a," that can account for its being as "ba," there must be something else.³⁷⁹ The point is that the syllable "ba" possesses characteristics that are unique to it and not possessed by its components. When conjoined, the "b" and the "a" exist in a unity that is its own being and has its own wholeness. The form of the whole is not the form that is a component of the substantial unity but is the form "in virtue of which the composite is a quidditative being."³⁸⁰

The unity of simplicity is a unity of true identity. Scotus explains: "for whatever is there is really the same as whatever else is there, and is not merely one by union as is the case in the other modes."³⁸¹ The human soul enjoys a unity of simplicity, as abovementioned, though it is itself composite and its parts are formally distinct.³⁸² Like Aquinas, Scotus contends that the nutritive, sensitive and intellective souls are really identical and numerically one.³⁸³ The formal distinction for Scotus is a distinction that lies between a real distinction and a merely conceptual one. Two realities or aspects of a thing are formally distinct if in reality they are truly identical, in fact, not even God could separate them, and yet, they are defined independently of each other, for example,

³⁷⁸ *QMA*, bk. 8, q. 4, 14 [4]: "Primo, quia materia et forma, si intelligantur non unita, non est contradictio quod utrumque intellegitur in se esse, et compositum non erit. Vel sic: illud compositum habet aliquam causam suae unitatis in se, et non a partibus eius; cuiusmodi partes, intellectae non unitae, possunt intelligi in se esse sine contradictione, ex fine VII. Ergo ex VII in fine: Aliquid est in composito quo ipsum est unum praeter materiam et formam."

³⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, 1041b 12-24.

³⁸⁰ *Ordinatio* 3.2.2, n. 9, trans. Cross 1998, 87.

³⁸¹ *Oxford Commentary on the Four Books of the Sentences*, trans. Walsh 1973, 623.

³⁸² Cross 1998, 40. While Aquinas explicitly contends that the intellectual, nutritive, and sensitive souls in the human being are numerically one and the same soul (*ST*, I q. 76, a. 3), Cross observes that Scotus does not find it necessary to claim that the human soul has sensory and vegetative souls in addition to the intellective, nor does he give reasons for this, though Cross contends that it is most likely due to parsimony, 70. The human soul, according to Scotus, is however composite and is able to perform different functions.

³⁸³ *Ordinatio* 4, d. 44, q. I, n. 4. See also Cross 2003, 275; Bonansea 1983, 16.

whiteness and color.³⁸⁴ The unity of simplicity then, is not a union of thing and thing as we see in the unity of collection, order, accident, or composite, rather, it is a unity of the real identity of formally distinct realities.³⁸⁵

What we can take from this section on unity is that since unity is coextensive with being, there is a proper unity to every level of being. Since the created world is a reflection of the uncreated, the creature is an expression of the creator, the unity of singularity reflects the divine unity as it expresses the most perfect realization of the created unity. All other unities are understood as they relate to the highest expression of unity. What defines accidental unity is the notion of inherence. What defines substantial unity is the act of informing such that it brings about a new, whole, individual being. The unity of simplicity is a unity of formally distinct entities.

3.2 The Unity of the Human Being

The human being is a composite of a material body and an immaterial intellectual soul joined together in a substantial unity resulting in one essence, nature, or substance.³⁸⁶ The intellectual soul is the specific form or proper form of the human being.³⁸⁷ Scotus contends, however, unlike Aquinas, that the intellectual soul is not the only form within the human composite, which also contains a form of the body (*forma corporeitatis*) as

³⁸⁴ Cross 1998, 8. See also Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1.8.1.4, n. 193; *Oxon.*, bk. 1, d. 2, q. 7; Grajewski, *The Formal Distinction of Duns Scotus: A Study in Metaphysics*, The Catholic University of America Philosophical Series 90 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press 1944); Mackey 1997, 158-160.

³⁸⁵ Cross 1998, 7.

³⁸⁶ Bonansea 1983, 11-12. Scotus, *Ordinatio*. 2. 1, 301; VII, 149: “Anima naturaliter est perfectiva corporis organici una forma.”

³⁸⁷ Scotus, *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2: “. . . ergo anima intellectiva est proprie forma hominis.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 139. Scotus here offers three arguments for this claim all based his claim that we have an act of knowledge that transcends sense knowledge. For a discussion of the intellectual soul as specific form of the human being see also Bonansea 1983, 20-24; Cross 2003, 271-276.

well as forms for each of the organs.³⁸⁸ According to Aquinas, it is not possible for there to be more than one substantial form in any given substantial composite.³⁸⁹ Moreover, it is the substantial form or the human soul that gives being to the human composite for, as Cross explains, “one form is a necessary condition for the presence of exactly one existence.”³⁹⁰ Thus, by way of the substantial form, which communicates being to the body, the human composite is a unified whole.³⁹¹ For Scotus, the unity of the person is more complicated because he does contend that a plurality of forms is found in the human composite, but in such a way that he can preserve the unity of the human person. To understand how he preserves this unity we must first understand why Scotus rejects Aquinas’ view and maintains that there is a plurality of forms, and second, show how he understands this unity.

Richard Cross shows that there are several reasons, both theological and empirical, that Scotus offers in support of the plurality of forms. Cross, along with Bonansea, contends that the main reason Scotus rejects Aquinas’ view that there is only one substantial form per composite substance has to do with the empirical fact that once the animating soul has left the body, the body remains intact, albeit temporarily.³⁹² As both Cross and Bonansea explain, Aquinas is unable to account for the continued

³⁸⁸ *Oxon.* 4, d. 2, q. 3, n. 54: “Universaliter in quolibet animato necesse est ponere illam formam qua corpus est corpus, aliam ab illa qua est animatum. . . Unde corpus quod est altera paras manens quidem in esse suo proprio sine anima, habet per consequens formam qua est corpus isto modo et non habet animam: et ita illa forma necessario est alia ab anima;” See also D.E. Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford In the 13th Century* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 311-316; Cross 1998, 47-76; Cross 2003, 271-276; Mackey 1997, 160-162; Bonansea 1983, 12.

³⁸⁹ Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 76, a. 4: “Of one thing there is but one substantial being. But the substantial form gives substantial being. Therefore of one thing there is but one substantial form. But the soul is the substantial form of man. Therefore it is impossible that there be in man another substantial form besides the intellectual soul.” Trans. Pegis 1945, 307-308.

³⁹⁰ Cross 1998, 48. See also Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 76, a. 3;

³⁹¹ For a discussion of the unity of the human person for Aquinas see A. Maurer, “Descartes and Aquinas on the Unity of a Human Being: Revisited,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 57(1993): 497-511.

³⁹² Cross 2003, 272-273.

existence of the body after death.³⁹³ Scotus posits the form of the body to explain the continued existence of the body after the animating soul leaves. Given this plurality of forms, how does Scotus account for the unity of the individual human person?

The convertibility of unity and being functions as a guiding principle and the degrees of unity function as a roadmap to understanding how Scotus addresses this question. There are several answers given in the literature that I will consider before offering my own understanding of this issue.

As pointed out above, Scotus considers that the intellectualive soul is the specific or proper form of the human being. D. E. Sharp points out that the intellectualive soul, for Scotus, is also the animating soul, which is the formal principal of being and operation.³⁹⁴ She explains that Scotus defends himself on the charge that a plurality of forms destroys the unity of the human being by claiming that forms of the organs and the form of the body, in relation to the intellectualive soul, are only partial actualities.³⁹⁵ The intellectualive soul is, for Scotus, that form by which the whole composite comes together as this one being.³⁹⁶ The forms of the organ and the form of the body are inferior forms in relation to the intellectualive soul, which functions in an ultimate way. Sharp explains that since there is but one ultimate form in the human composite, by which the other forms are fully actualized, the unity of the human being is preserved. Bonansea follows closely Sharp's reading of Scotus pointing out that Scotus is in close alignment with the Augustinians such that it is by way of the subordinate relationship between the lower forms and the

³⁹³ Cross 2003, 272; Bonansea 1983, 16.

³⁹⁴ Sharp 1964, 313. Scotus, *Oxon.* 2, d. 16, n. 6: "Anima est immediatum principium formale essendi et principium immediatum operandi." This is not a controversial view.

³⁹⁵ Sharp 1964, 314. Scotus, *Oxon.* 4, d. 2, q. 3, n. 46: "Totius compositi est unum esse et tamen includit multa esse partialia."

³⁹⁶ Scotus, *Oxon.* 4, d. 2, q. 3, n. 46: "Concedo quod formale esse totius compositi est principaliter per unam formam et illa forma est qua totum compositum est hoc ens."

intellective soul that the unity of the human being is achieved.³⁹⁷ Cross gives a detailed analysis of Scotus' position in which he explains Scotus' response both to Aquinas and Henry of Ghent. In this analysis Cross emphasizes that Scotus consistently distinguishes between the form of the body which accounts for the "form and layout of the body and its parts," and the animating form (the intellective soul), which is responsible for bodily functions in every animate being.³⁹⁸ Given this plurality of forms, Cross has a different reading from Sharp or Bonansea on how Scotus maintains the unity of the human being. Cross appeals to Scotus' third degree of unity, substantial unity, within the metaphysics of potency and act to explain how Scotus maintains the unity of the human being.³⁹⁹ Cross argues that, according to Scotus, in the case of a composite with two substantial forms, "matter and the lower substantial form constitute a composite."⁴⁰⁰ A lower-order composite, matter with the form of the body, then, stands in relation to a higher substantial form, the intellective or animating form, as potentiality to actuality.⁴⁰¹ While there is clearly a relationship of subordination here, Cross sees it as a "pattern of hierarchically arranged composites" each of which satisfies a "unity requirement."⁴⁰² Since these unities are themselves each substantial unities, there is one part that stands in potentiality to the other. Cross contends that this part is a material cause and given this, shows that Scotus understands the relationship of the forms within the composite to be one of essential order.⁴⁰³ The forms within the composite are hierarchically and essentially ordered to the ultimate substantial form, the intellective soul, thus

³⁹⁷ Bonansea 1983, 12.

³⁹⁸ Cross 1998, 63.

³⁹⁹ Cross 1998, 66-69.

⁴⁰⁰ Cross 1998, 66.

⁴⁰¹ Cross 1998, 66.

⁴⁰² Cross 1998, 66.

⁴⁰³ Cross 1998, 67.

guaranteeing the unity of the human being.⁴⁰⁴ Mackey offers yet another reading of the Scotistic account of the unicity of the human being, based on the formal distinction.⁴⁰⁵ By way of the formal distinction, Mackey argues that Scotus is able to account for “an integral entitative unity” which is over and above a unity of order.⁴⁰⁶ There is consistency in the literature that Scotus understands that the whole is greater than its parts, such that a substantial union brings about a whole being which has properties different from its components. The question is whether these various readings of how Scotus understands the unity of the human being can account for the wholeness of the individual human being? I appreciate Cross’ analysis of substantial union and Mackey’s reading of the formal distinction as going further than a relationship of subordination in accounting for wholeness. I contend, however, that Scotus has a response to all of these readings found in his discussion of *per se* being in question nine of the *Quodlibetal Questions*. I will now discuss this question.

3.3 On Question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*: Can an Angel Be Made into an Informing Form?

In this section I will examine three notions: *per se* being, the nature of the accident, and the immateriality of the soul. I will follow Scotus’ discussion in Question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* where he asks whether God can make the angel become an informing form.⁴⁰⁷ An examination of these notions is important because from it I will be

⁴⁰⁴ Cross 1998, 71.

⁴⁰⁵ Mackey 1997, 160.

⁴⁰⁶ Mackey 1997, 160.

⁴⁰⁷ *Quodl.* 9.5 [2]: “Sed quaeritur de informatione formali, an scilicet Deus possit facere Angelum esse formam informantem.”

able to show both how Scotus secures the unity of the human being as person and how through the particular emphasis he gives, he also offers a guide to his readers as to how he grounds and explains the cognitive activity between the immaterial intellect and the material sense. What is at issue in Question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* is the intricate nature of the informing form itself and what kinds of relationships it has with matter. Scotus uses the case of the angel as a way into this question. The angel is an immaterial form, an incorporeal being with an intellect and a will such that each individual angel is its own species. As its own species, the individual angel is a subsistent individual. Can such a being inform matter?

Since Scotus is interested in the case of the angel, before discussing the arguments in Question 9, it is helpful to consider his remarks in Question 2 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* where he clarifies that the angelic nature is an immaterial form. As an immaterial form, the angel is a “this” of itself, not dependent on matter for individuality, which, of course, Scotus rejects as the principle of individuation. Against those who claim that matter is what individuates, Scotus responds that “every immaterial form is a “this” of itself or by reason of what it is.”⁴⁰⁸ Moreover, it is not by way of its quiddity or essence that the immaterial form is a “this” or a singular individual.⁴⁰⁹ Thus, Scotus contends that the angel, as such a specific nature, cannot be

realized in multiple instances because such a unique singular and individual form would contain in itself intensively and extensively the total entity of that form, as is clear from the case of the sun.”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ *Quodl.* 2.9 [3]: “. . . quod forma quaecunque immaterialis sit de se haec, sive ex ratione suae quiditatis.” Here Scotus is responding to Aquinas’ claims that matter is the individuating principle. See *ST I*, q. 41, a. 6.

⁴⁰⁹ *Quodl.*, 2.9[3]: “. . . quod quamvis forma immaterialis aliqua non sit haec formaliter sua quiditate.”

⁴¹⁰ *Quodl.* 2.9 [3]: “Aut intelligitur sic, quod quamvis forma immaterialis aliqua non sit haec formaliter sua quiditate, tamen ipsa in re multiplicari non potest, quia unica forma talis singularis, et signata habet in se tota entitate illius formae, et intensive, et extensive, ut patet de Sole.”

A specific nature is intrinsically repugnant to being multiplied into many or predicated of many. If one conceives of a specific nature in such a way that it can be several, Scotus argues that one would be in contradiction.⁴¹¹ To further clarify the nature of an immaterial form, Scotus examines the intellectual soul of the human being.

Scotus argues that the intellectual soul, in its nature and prior to being conjoined with the body, is the end product of a creative act, i.e., generation.⁴¹² Earlier, in line with Aristotle, Scotus explained that the end product or term of generation is a substance or substantial being.⁴¹³ He now further clarifies that the end product of a creative act is an individual or a this.⁴¹⁴ What this means is that the soul, as an immaterial form, is individuated independently from its union with the body.⁴¹⁵ Each soul is distinct and unique by its own nature, apart from its being in matter. Scotus considers that one might argue, then, that rather than matter, it is the soul's aptitude to exist in matter that individuates it.⁴¹⁶ But the aptitude to exist in matter is posterior to the soul's absolute nature, and interestingly, Scotus contends that: "this soul has this aptitude to be in this body, and this aptitude for just this body is repugnant to another soul which has the

⁴¹¹ *Quodl.*, 2.10 [3]: ". . . sequitur quod ratio formae specificae in Angelis includit repugnantia, imo contradictionem ad plurificari realiter, . . ."

⁴¹² *Quodl.* 2.16 [5]: "Praetera, instatur de anima intellectiva, quae prius nature est terminus creationis, quam infundatur. "

⁴¹³ *Quodl.* 2.2 [1]: "Probatio maioris, nam per hoc distinguitur generatio ab aliis mutationibus, per Philosophum 5. *Phy.* Quia ipsa est ad substantiam, sive ad esse substantiale."

⁴¹⁴ *Quodl.* 2.16 [5]: "Primus autem terminus creationis, ut talis, formaliter est hic."

⁴¹⁵ *Quodl.* 2.16 [5]: "Ergo anima naturaliter prius est haec, quam unitur materiae, et pari ratione de ali anima, prius natura est haec, quam unatur materiae. Unde ista anima est haec sua propria singularitate, et inde est haec, et no illa, et per sonsequens prima distinctione singularitatis distinguitur a singulari distincta ab illa; ergo distinctae sunt istae animae prius natura quam uniantur materiae, non ergo per se et primo distinguuntur sua materia." Recall also the above discussion in section 3.1.

⁴¹⁶ *Quodl.* 2.18 [6]: "Si dicatur quod non est haec sic per materiam, scilicet per unionem actualem, vel per esse actuale in ipsa, sed per aptitudine essendi in ipsa materia, et ipsa no est prior illa aptitudine."

aptitude to be in another body.”⁴¹⁷ The aptitude to exist in matter is particular to the individual intellectual soul, which has an aptitude to exist in a particular body and no other. But an aptitude is not an absolute entity. The aptitude to exist in a particular body is had by a soul that is already singular by its own nature such that it is its singularity that determines the aptitude to exist in a particular body. Neither matter nor the aptitude to exist in a particular material body can account for the singular individuality of the intellectual soul.

What we can take from this discussion is that the intellectual soul, like the angel, is the end product of a creative act and as such is an individual ‘this’. That the intellectual soul, like the angel, is a specific nature, means that its intrinsic singularity is repugnant to being multiplied. So the question that Scotus asks in *Quodlibetal Questions* 9, whether an angel can be made into an informing form, can shed light on how it is that the intellectual soul, which is similar to the angel, is able to be conjoined to the body. With these remarks in mind, I now turn to that question.

Scotus claims that there exists a hierarchy of forms, which is itself arranged according to degrees of perfection.⁴¹⁸ The angel represents in this hierarchy a perfection over and above the intellectual soul. Like the angel, the intellectual soul can exist independently from a material body. But the intellectual soul, when it is not joined to the body, does not enjoy the same level of perfection that the angel intrinsically has. The intellectual soul enjoys a union with the body. That it has this capacity is naturally

⁴¹⁷ *Quodl.* 2.18 [6]: “Istud no evadit argumetu, quia natura ipsa absoluta est prior natura ipsa aptitudine, et haec anima habet aptitudine hac ad corpus, et illi anime reugnat aptitudo huiusmodi ad corpus hoc, et convenit sibi alia aptitudo ad aliud corpus.”

⁴¹⁸ *Quodl.* 9.9 [4]: “Angelus est perfectus in specie perfecta, imo perfectiori, quam sit aliqua species substantiae materialis ordo enim specierum est ut ordo numerorum,” Scotus here references Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 8 1043b33-1044a). See also *Quodl.* 9.15 [6] where Scotus refers to the “order of perfection among forms,” “ordo perfectionis in formis.”

intrinsic to it, for Scotus argues, if its nature is not essentially able to be independent then it can never attain such independence.⁴¹⁹ The capacity to exist in union with a material body distinguishes the intellectual soul from the angel. How is this capacity to be understood?

In the hierarchy of forms, lower forms are distinguished from higher forms according to their relationship with matter, that is, their dependence or independence from matter. The way a lower form actualizes matter must be different from that form, the intellectual soul, which can both actualize matter and exist independently from matter. In Article II of Question 9 Scotus considers four arguments that demonstrate that the angel cannot be an informing form. While he says that only the first two are conclusive, I will discuss each one here since there are interesting points to take from all four arguments. The first argument is based on *per se* being, the second is based on the ability to actualize matter, the third is based on remoteness from matter, and the fourth is based on the intellectual function.

3.3.1. First Argument - *Per se* Being

In the first argument, Scotus claims: “What is simply subsistent *per se* cannot be the form of matter.”⁴²⁰ Just as matter needs itself to be of a certain structure (all actually existing matter is already formed) or to have a certain capacity to receive a certain form, forms that inform matter must themselves be intrinsically capable of existing in matter.

⁴¹⁹ *Quodl.* 9.14 [5]: “. . . cuilibet actui simpliciter, per rationem propriam, vel convenit aptitudo ad per se informandum, vel repugnat informare.” What Scotus argues here is that the ability to inform matter is part of the essence of the act, that is, “rooted in its proper nature.” That the soul is able to exist independently of the body is part of its essential nature, just as that it is able to know the divine essence in the beatific vision is part of its essential capacity.

⁴²⁰ *Quodl.* 9.7 [3]: “. . . illud quod est simpliciter per se subsistens, non potest esse forma materiae.”

Not all forms have such a capacity. Moreover, this capacity to exist in matter does not in itself prevent the form from existing separately from matter. Scotus argues that the angel is a being that subsists *per se* and therefore cannot be a being that informs another being. In order to clarify what it means to subsist *per se*, Scotus offers three different meanings of *per se* being. I will address each separately.

3.3.1.a. First meaning of *per se* being - Accident

The first meaning of *per se* being which Scotus offers designates “something which exists in isolation or apart from a subject.”⁴²¹ The example he gives is curious: “an accident can be a *per se* being when it does not inhere in a subject.”⁴²² When does an accident not inhere in a subject? According to Aristotelian metaphysics, accidents by their nature exist by way of the subject in which they inhere, for accidents are said of the subject.⁴²³ How can it be that an accident ever exists apart from the subject? One case in which an accident can exist apart from a subject is the theological doctrine of transubstantiation, to which Scotus alluded at the beginning of question 9, “God causes a material accident to exist without its subject in the sacrament of the altar.”⁴²⁴

In the sacrament of the altar, the material accidents of bread and wine exist even when the substance of bread is replaced by the substance of the body of Christ. The accidents of bread remain even though the substance of bread does not. This happens, though, only by divine intervention. Thus, it is not something easily recognized or

⁴²¹ *Quodl.* 9.7 [3]: “. . . uno modo intelligitur ens per se solitarie,” trans. Alluntis and Wolter 1975, 220.

⁴²² *Quodl.* 9.7 [3]: “. . . accidens potest esse ens per se quado non est in subiecto.”

⁴²³ Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 73b5-10.

⁴²⁴ *Quodl.* 9.2 [1]: “quia Deus facit accidens materiale sine subiecto in Sacramento Altaris.”

explained by reason.⁴²⁵ However, it is clear that the case of transubstantiation influences the way he understands the nature of accident such that he is able to give careful consideration the notions of essence and accident. Since I am here concerned to show why Scotus can argue that the accident is an example of the first sense of *per se* being, i.e., something that can exist in isolation or apart from its subject, it is helpful to consider passages from *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle (QMA)* where he is concerned with the nature of the accident as well as a passage from a mature work, *Quodlibetal Questions*. I will consider the passage from the *QMA* first in which he asks whether it is of the essence or nature of the accident to inhere in a subject. In his discussion he makes several distinctions, the first involving two different senses of accident:

Reply: to begin with one must distinguish what is meant by “accident.” For “accident”: [a] if it refers to what the name signifies *per se*, as the concept on which the name is imposed *per se*, i.e., “accidentality” itself, “inherence” would seem to be synonymous with this, and in this sense no question would arise. [b] If it refers to something that is called “accident” concretely, for example, quantity, then there [is] room for a question, hereafter it will be understood in this sense.⁴²⁶

The distinction between the above two senses of “accident” is based on its different significations, the mental entity or concept and the extramental entity or thing. On the one hand, there is the conceptual meaning of accident and here ‘accident’ and inherence are synonymous. On the other hand, when the actual concrete accident is considered, the

⁴²⁵ Mackey 1997, 196. Mackey contends that Scotus does not seem entirely satisfied with transubstantiation: Scotus juxtaposes an argument for consubstantiation, where the substance of the bread would exist alongside the substance of the body of Christ, next to an argument for transubstantiation in such a way that the argument for consubstantiation is more compelling rationally. Scotus ultimately accepts transubstantiation, a doctrine which the church had recently adopted, but nonetheless leaves in his strong arguments for consubstantiation.

⁴²⁶ *QMA*, bk 7, q. 1, 8[2]: “Responsio: distinguitur primo de accidente. Quod ‘accidens’, si accipitur pro illo quod per se significat nomen, ut pro conceptu quem importat nomen accidentis per se—qui est ipsa accidentalitas-synonymum videtur cum hoc quod est inhaerentia; et tunc nulla est quaestio. Si accipiatur pro illo quod denominat hoc concretum ‘accidens’, puta pro quantitate, sic quaestio habet locum; et sic fiat deinceps sermo.”

relationship of accident to inherence is not clear. Scotus considers an accident a thing that has its own existence such that when considered in this way it is considered not only apart from the substance in which it inheres but apart from inherence at all.⁴²⁷ This is in line with the previous discussion, which according to Cross, it is clear, for Scotus, that accidents count as individual things, as beings that can be known.⁴²⁸ Cross explains that for Scotus, since accidents are principles of acting, that is, principles for knowing a substance, as they are themselves objects of sense cognition, therefore, they are things that exist both as mental entities and extramental things.⁴²⁹

Accidentality as a mental entity is the common nature of accident under the garb of universality. So indirectly, the word “accident” refers to the extramental common nature in referring to the concept.⁴³⁰ If “accident” simply refers to the concept, then it is the essence of accidentality that is its sense, i.e., its definition. But since an accident is a thing, it has its own essence and essential properties. When “accident” is understood as the actual accident, inherence is not strictly synonymous with it.

Said in another way, the definition of accident includes the notion of inherence such that in this sense accident and inherence are synonymous. To say that an accident inheres in a subject is an analytic statement. It simply clarifies the nature of accident. This is certainly in line with the way that Aristotle understands accident. But there is another sense [b], where “accident” signifies an accident in a concrete sense, that is, as a particular thing that is understood as an accident, for example, quantity or quality. Scotus

⁴²⁷ Cross 1998, 94.

⁴²⁸ Cross 1998, 95.

⁴²⁹ Cross 1998, 95-96.

⁴³⁰ Perler 2003, 166-169. Perler explains that Scotus understands words as referring to the mental concept, but not as mental concept, rather as that which itself refers to the extramental entity. Words neither simply signify the extramental thing nor just the mental concept. Words signify “the representational content of a species” which does not simply exist conceptually but exists in the extramental thing as the common nature.

claims that in this sense, accident is not necessarily synonymous with inherence. Since an accident is a thing, it has an essence and essential properties. Thus, when considering the accident as a thing, inherence becomes one of its essential properties. It seems that there are at least two motivations behind this second sense of accident.

First, a particular instance of an accident can be considered apart from the substance that it might really inhere in. And when considered simply as itself, inhering is a property of it, not its meaning. In the case of transubstantiation an accident really does exist apart from its substance. That this can happen is not simply due to a miracle. The accident itself must be intrinsically capable of existing independent of the substance or it would never be able to so exist. The notions of accident and substance remain the same, but as they are manifested in reality in the sacrament of the altar, accidents exist apart from the substance that is no longer present. The framework of signification at the level of name to concept and concept to essence remains intact but cannot speak to what happens in the eucharist, in terms of inherence.

Second, another motivation of Scotus concerns the fact that substance is never directly or immediately experienced.⁴³¹ What moves the sense is not the substance but the accident.⁴³² Accident is directly known, substance is indirectly known. While it might be the case that substance is more primary than accident since accident is said of substance, it is the particular accident that is perceived. The fact that Scotus distinguishes

⁴³¹ Wolter 1946, 63-64. Wolter writes, "Scotus never tires of pointing out that we have no immediate knowledge of substance as such."

⁴³² *QMA*, bk 7, q. 3, [2]: "Quod species substantiae non sit in intellectu, probatio: quia tunc species substantiae prius esset in sensu et sic posset substantia cognosci a sensu, cuius oppositum est manifestum, quia omnia sensibilia sunt quantitates vel qualitates. . . . Aliter dicitur quod non est in intellectu nisi species accidentis, et immediate causatur illa species ab accidente, et mediate a substantia. Et primo repraesentat accidens, et secundo substantiam. . . . Quia illa cognitio quam habemus de substantia est perfectior cognitio cum attingitur quam cognitio accidentis; tunc, licet accidens sit primum cognoscibile respectu intellectus nostri generatione, . . ."

this second sense of accident, conceived as a thing, is motivated not only by a theological concern, but also the way substance is experienced.

Scotus now examines the nature of inherence and claims that it has two different meanings:

[a] one is the actual union of an existing accident with its existing subject as a kind of act with the potential. [b] The other is an essential order or dependence of the accident upon substance according to the essential natures of each.⁴³³

Scotus claims that while [a] is evident because it concerns actual existence, [b] abstracts from existence and therefore needs proof.⁴³⁴ What should be noted about [a] is that Scotus understands the relationship of accident to substance as a “kind of act with potential” and is thus referring here to accidental unity, which, like substantial unity, is grounded in a metaphysics of potency and act. But the union of accident and substance does not result in a subsistent *per se* being. The accident qualifies the substance. Scotus further argues that usually the two senses of inherence would be “actual or aptitudinal” but he rejects this distinction because it cannot account for the separated accident.⁴³⁵ It is necessary in transubstantiation that the accidents of bread and wine remain as accidents in order to signify the body of Christ. But their being as accidents cannot be founded on their actual inherence in a subject, since there is no subject in which to inhere, so it must be founded on something other, namely, the essential order that exists between the essential natures of accident and subject. This latter kind of inherence applies to both the

⁴³³ *QMA*, bk 7, q. 1, 9[2]: “Tunc distinguitur secundo de inhaerentia, quod inhaerentia est duplex. Una est actualis unio accidentis existentis cum subiecto existente, ut actus aliquis cum potenciali. Alia est dependentia sive essentialis ordo accidentis secundum quiditatem suam ad substantiam secundum quiditatem suam.”

⁴³⁴ *QMA*, bk. 7, q. 1, 9[2]: “Prima patet. Secunda probatur, quia demonstratio abstrahit ab existentia et a consequentibus rem in quantum existit.”

⁴³⁵ *QMA*, bk. 7, q. 1, 10[2]: “Hoc forte consuevit dici de inhaerentia actuali et aptitudinali. Prima non semper inest accidenti; secunda semper inest, sive existenti sine subiecto sive non existenti. –Contra: aptitudinalis in accidente separato non verificat aliquam praedicationem denominativam sicut secunda hic.”

concept of accident and to the separated accident, which remains accident even if not inhering in a subject.⁴³⁶

Scotus takes his examination of the notion of inherence a step further as he considers the distinction between “to be of the essence of A” and “to be A itself.” Scotus argues,

Thirdly, there is a clarification of “to be of the essence.” For “to be of the essence of A” is not the same really or essentially as “to be A itself.” The first indeed implies the second but the converse is not true, for what is of the essence of A is precisely that which is included *per se* in the quidditative concept of A and therefore, is posited in the essential notion of its quiddity, and not as something added. Something can be really identical with A although it lies outside its concept, for example, unity, truth, etc. are outside the concept of being, which is prior to these [proper attributes], according to Avicenna, V [of his *Metaphysics*]. However, this does not say these are really distinct things other than being.⁴³⁷

Unity and truth lie outside of the concept of being in the sense that they are formally distinct from being but really identical with it. In light of this distinction, Scotus writes that Avicenna calls, in an extended sense, unity and truth “accidents” in relation to the concept of being for they are not part of the concept. The other example that Scotus gives is that of the intensification of whiteness. If a minimal whiteness is intensified in its whiteness it is identical to it in reality but the degree of intensification is something in addition to the concept of whiteness itself.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ Of course the real problem here is that the accidents of bread no longer signify bread but the body of Christ. Still their presence as accident is required. Somehow their natural signification is nulled, but they are still able to signify.

⁴³⁷ *QMA* bk. 7, q. 1, 11[2]: “Tertio exponitur illud quod dicitur ‘de essentia’. Non enim idem est esse de essentia *a* et esse idem essentialiter vel realiter ipsi *a*. Primum quidem infert secundum, sed non e converso. Quia de essentia *a* praecise est illud quod includitur per se in conceptu quidditativo *a*, et ideo ponitur in ratione eius quidditativa, non ut additum. Potest autem esse idem realiter ipsi *a* licet sit extra conceptum eius, puta ‘unitas’, ‘veritas’ etc. extra conceptum entis qui prior est illis, secundum Avicennam V. Non tamen ista dicunt rem aliam ab ente.”

⁴³⁸ *QMA*, bk 7, q. 1, 11[2]: “Exemplum hic de gradu addito albedini remissae quando intenditur: secundum unam OPINIONEM est idem realiter, non tamen de essentia eius.”

There are at least three points to be taken from this discussion. First, the accident can be understood as a *per se* being not simply because it can be considered in itself apart from the substance but because the accident is actually a thing in its own right, independent from substance. Moreover, when the accident is considered as a concrete, extramental being, what Scotus observes is that neither kind of inherence is a part of its essence.⁴³⁹

The second point concerns the distinction between “being of the essence of A” and “being A itself.” Since inherence is not strictly of the nature of an accident, the example of the accident speaks to the very problem at issue for Scotus in *Quodlibetal Questions* 9, namely, the nature of the informing form. If it is the case that an accident is in a sense in its nature indifferent to inhering, then it is easy to see how a substantial form in its nature can be indifferent to informing. The issue is of course how the intellectual soul which is an informing form can exist separately from the body.

The third point has to do with the nature of cognition. The relationship of the intelligible species to the intellectual soul is not one of form to matter, but one of accident to substance.⁴⁴⁰ The intelligible species itself is an accident such that it is that which has a representational content that signifies the extramental common nature. As an accident

⁴³⁹ *QMA*, bk 7, q. 1, 12[3]: “Ad quaestionem igitur primo dico quod neutra inhaerentia est de essentia accidentis secundo modo sumpti, scilicet accipiendo ‘accidens’ pro eo quod hoc nomine denominatur, ut ‘quantum’, ‘quale’ et huiusmodi.”

⁴⁴⁰ Perler 2003, 167. See also *QMA*, bk. 5, q. 7 where Scotus asks about the possibility of some accidents which are only numerically different existing in the same subject. He is here concerned about the nature of the existence of both the sensible species and the intelligible species in the sense organ or intellectual soul, respectively. It is clear that he understands the species as accidents. For example at 3 [1]: Scotus writes, “Ergo videtur quod species sit accidens reale.” Etzhorn and Wolter provide a nice explanation for the meaning of the word species in footnote 1 where they also write, “In all cases it [the species] is an accidental quality in the subject in which it exists, whether that be the object itself, the medium, or the soul of the knowing subject.” (438)

itself, in its nature, the intelligible species is indifferent to inhering and that this is the case will help explain its presence to the intellect, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Based on the above discussion concerning the nature of accident and the nature of inherence, Scotus clearly distinguishes between the concept of accident and the concrete accident in itself. What determines the nature of the accident is not its relationship to substance. This relationship lies outside the nature of the particular accident. The point is that the mode of its existence is not what determines what it is. It is in this way that the accident can be understood as a *per se* being in the first sense.

3.3.1.b. The Second Sense of *Per Se* Being

Scotus delineates a second sense of *per se* being:

A *per se* being is contrasted with one that exists in another, and in this sense it is a thing which neither actually inheres in another nor has an aptitude to do so. Every substance, not only one that is composite, but matter and form as well, are all beings *per se* in this sense, for though a substantial form is in the matter it informs, it does not inhere in it like an accident, for “to inhere” says that it does not inform its subject *per se*. What inheres is neither an act simply, but only in a qualified sense, nor does it form one thing *per se* with the subject in which it inheres. What informs *per se* has the opposite characteristics.⁴⁴¹

Per se being in the second sense is found in the distinction between the acts of inhering and informing. All substances, then, not only the composite substance, but also matter and form themselves, have this type of *per se* being, namely, their being does not inhere in another nor has the aptitude to do so. Even though a form is said to be in the matter, it

⁴⁴¹ *Quodl.* 9.7 [3]: “...ens per se prout distinguitur contra ens in alio, et sic per se ens est idem quod non inhaerens actualiter, nec aptitudinaliter, et hoc modo quaecunque substantia non tantum composita, sed etiam materia, et forma est ens per se, quia forma substantialis, licet in sit materiae informando non tamen inhaeret, qui inhaerere dicit non per se informare: qui inhaerens nec est actus simpliciter, sed actus secundum quid, nec cum illo, cui inhaeret facit per se unum, opposita conveniunt ei, quod per se informat.”

is in the matter not by way of inhering in it but rather by informing it, actualizing a potentiality. Form is not in this matter as an accident is in a subject. Rather by informing the matter, the form is the act of the matter. The accident is not an act simply nor does it, in inhering in a subject, form one thing with that subject. As per my discussion on substantial unity, that which informs is, by contrast, a simple act, such that in informing a subject, it becomes one with it bringing about a new, whole individual with properties unique to its wholeness and thus different from its components.

3.3.1.c. Subsistent *Per Se* Being

Scotus claims that there is an even higher degree of *per se* being. He finds this third degree of being *per se* expressed in the *suppositum*. The *suppositum* is a fully subsistent individual that is incommunicable and whose nature is repugnant to being divided. It is this kind of *per se* being that enjoys the highest degree of singularity and is that which I contend can ultimately guarantee the unity of the human being for Scotus.

What drives Scotus' understanding of a *suppositum* is a theological concern, the backdrop of which is the incarnation. If the incarnation not only reveals God as father and son but further reveals the holy spirit, each of these three as essentially divine must be able to be considered in themselves, that is, have *per se* being. If this is the case, that each has *per se* being, then each would have to be a *suppositum*, a subsistent individual. Alluntis and Wolter explain that *suppositum* is a Latin word used to translate the Greek word, *hypostasis*, which Greek theologians used to indicate one of the persons in the

Trinity.⁴⁴² The theological doctrine of the trinity, that there are three distinct persons, moves Scotus beyond the categorical definition of a substance as that which merely enjoys independent existence and does not inhere in another. In order to explain the distinction between the diverse persons in the trinity, there must be something more to a substance than merely the capacity to exist independently.⁴⁴³ Moreover, as has already been shown, something other than matter has to serve as that which individuates the *per se* being of the substance, not only because God is immaterial but because matter in its indeterminateness alone is incapable of grounding the understanding of *per se* being as a *suppositum*, a being whose nature is incommunicable. The *suppositum* is a subsistent *per se* being in the most proper sense, as Scotus explains:

Third, a *per se* being may refer to one which has its ultimate actuality, so that it is simply unable to be ordered *per se* to some ulterior act beyond that which it has, where the ulterior actualization would belong to it *per se*, either in a primary or participated sense. A *per se* being in this sense is called a *suppositum*, and if it is of an intellectual nature, it is called a person. Only this third is properly said to be subsisting, in the sense the Philosopher has in mind when he says: “Matter is only potentially ‘a this,’ and the form is that in virtue of which a thing is called ‘a this,’ but that third being compounded of both matter and form is simply ‘a this.’” In other words, something subsisting *per se* has its ultimate actualization so that it is unable to be ordered *per se* to some ulterior act.⁴⁴⁴

¹⁰⁹ Alluntis and Wolter 1975, 536. Alluntis and Wolter explain that *suppositum* is a Latin translation of *hypostasis*, the term that Greek theologians used to designate a divine person of the Trinity. Theologians, being particularly interested in understanding the union of human nature and divinity in the second person of the Trinity, were forced to develop a clear idea of a person – human, angelic or divine. Along these lines they retained the word, *suppositum*, to designate any fully subsistent individual, rational or not, though Boethius had defined the a person as “an individual substance of a rational nature.” Richard of St. Victor, according to Alluntis and Wolter, seems to have had a direct influence on Scotus’ own understanding and use of *suppositum*. A *suppositum* “would seem to be the incommunicable existence of any nature, and a person would be an intellect *suppositum*.”

⁴⁴³ Cross 1999, 67. Cross explains that for Scotus any independent substance exhibits three features: existence *per se*, individual unity, and non-repeatability (incommunicability). It is haecceity that endows the substance with these features. Moreover, a divine person also exhibits these three features.

⁴⁴⁴ *Quodl.* 9.7 [3]: “Tertio modo ens *per se* dicitur illud, quod habet actualitatem ultimam, ita quod non est *per se* ordinabile ad aliqueactum simpliciter, ultra istum, quem habet, qui quidem actus ulterior possit esse actus eius *per se*: et hoc, vel primo, vel participative: quod hoc modo est *per se* ens communiter dicitur *suppositum*, et in natura intellectuali dicitur persona: hoc modo intelligitur maior de ente *per se*. Istud solum dicitur proprie subsistens, sicut Philosophus loquitur secundo de Anima dicens, quod materia est

That which has ultimate actuality is what cannot be ordered to another, and this is the subsistent individual.

Scotus explains further that “a substantial form is ordered *per se* to the being of the whole composite.”⁴⁴⁵ The substantial form is a *per se* being in the second sense. Since it can be ordered to the being of another, it is not a *per se* being in the third sense. The substantial form is ordered to the being of the whole composite, which Scotus explains is the act of the composite primarily and of the form participatively.⁴⁴⁶ The substantial form as part of the whole has only incidental being whereas the whole is said to have primary being.⁴⁴⁷ It is clear, then, why the angel as an immaterial form and a *per se* being in the third sense cannot be an informing form. The angel exists in a primary way and cannot be ordered to the being of another. But what about the intellectual soul of the human being?

The immaterial intellectual soul is the specific form of the human being. While it is capable of independent existence it is still ordered *per se* to the being of the individual human being. The question arises as to whether the being of the intellectual soul is identical to the being of the composite human individual. Scotus argues that it is not. As an immaterial form that is capable of informing matter, the intellectual soul in relation to the composite has being only participatively. The being of the intellectual soul is simply

potentia hoc aliquid, species autem, secundum quam aliquid dicitur hoc aliquid: tertium quod est ex ipsis, quod simpliciter est hoc aliquid, scilicet per se subsistens habet actualitatem ultimam non ordinabilem per se ad aliquem actum ulteriorem.”

⁴⁴⁵ *Quodl.* 9.8[4]: “. . . forma substantialis per se ordinatur ad esse totius.”

⁴⁴⁶ *Quodl.* 9.8 [4]: “Illud autem esse est actus simpliciter, compositi quidem per se primo sed formae participative.”

⁴⁴⁷ *Quodl.* 9.8[4]: “. . . quia pars dicitur esse per se, per accidens, hoc est per se participative, totum autem primo quod igitur est per se subsistens nec potest ordinari ad aliquod esse per se, illud non potest esse per se forma.”

not the being of the composite because it is part of the composite.⁴⁴⁸ The intellective soul enjoys the first sense and the second sense of *per se* being but not the third; it cannot be understood as a person.⁴⁴⁹

For the human being to be considered in the third sense of *per se* being, she must be considered at the level of her substantial unity, the unity of form and matter, for it is this unity that is the ground of her humanity and her personhood, not her soul alone. Two questions need to be considered. First, how is the human soul both capable of informing the body and existing independently? Second, what property does the intellective soul have such that when it is joined to the body, the human being is understood as a person? The first question will be considered in the following two sections. I will consider the second question in section 3.4 of this chapter.

3.3.2 Second Argument - Informing Form Communicates Actuality

The second argument in question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* in which Scotus explains that the angel cannot be an informing form reads “whatever can be a substantial form has the immediate ability through its essence to give actuality in an unqualified sense to matter itself.”⁴⁵⁰ But, Scotus argues, if it is impossible for a being to be such an “act of matter,” then it enjoys a greater perfection as a form. Since the essence of the angel does not include the ability to inform matter, it is therefore repugnant to it to do so.

⁴⁴⁸ *Quodl.* 9.43 [15]: “Videtur ergo ista neganda quod esse animae est idem, quod esse totius: quia anima habens esse, videtur pars totius habentis esse.”

⁴⁴⁹ *Quodl.* 9.12 [4]: “Hinc etiam patet quare anima separata non est persona.”

⁴⁵⁰ *Quodl.* 9.13 [5]: “Quicquid potest esse forma substantialis hoc sibi competit immediate per essentiam suam, scilicet posse dare actum simpliciter ipsi materiae.” Scotus here appeals to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* 104a23-30 and continues: “. . . quia patet quod non est alia ratio, quare hoc posset facere per se unum cum materia: nisi quia hoc est per se actual, et illud per se potentia et huius non est aliqua ratio ulterior: nisi propria ratio huius et illius; ergo cui repugnat esse actum materiae, hoc praecise repugnat sibi per rationem propriam.”

Thus, the angel cannot be an informing form. The human soul, by contrast, is a substantial form and therefore is essentially able to communicate actuality to matter. Scotus considers this second argument to be a conclusive one showing that it is impossible for the angel to be made into an informing form. The ability to inform matter or the repugnance to do so is an essential property. Thus, if the angel would be made into an informing form it would be essentially destroyed, i.e., no longer the angel. An important point to take from this argument is that what something is, is determined intrinsically and not extrinsically.

3.3.3 Third Argument - Remoteness from Matter

The third argument in question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* that Scotus considers is based on the order of perfection in forms.⁴⁵¹ The more perfect a form is, the more removed from matter it is.⁴⁵² But according to the intellectual soul's own nature, it has the ability to exist independently of matter. The angel is more perfect than the intellectual soul, therefore it should be even more remote from matter than the intellectual soul is.⁴⁵³ Scotus observes, however, that the degree of difference between the human soul and the angel is small. Unless it were impossible for the angel to exist in matter then it would be hard to see how the intellectual soul, which in its nature is able to exist independently from matter, would be different from the angel.

⁴⁵¹ *Quodl.* 9.15 [6]: "Tertia ratio posset poni talis: ordo perfectionis in formis."

⁴⁵² *Quodl.* 9.15 [6]: ". . . videtur esse per recessum earum a materia, sicut actus perfectior plus recedit a potentia;"

⁴⁵³ *Quodl.* 9.15 [6]: ". . . sed anima intellectiva tantum recedit a materia, quod naturae sua relictæ, potest habere esse suum proprium sine ea: ergo Angelus, qui est perfectior quacunque anima intellectiva, plus recedit a materia, sed non videtur quod plus possit recedere, nisi sibi repugnet inesse materiae."

Scotus contends that this argument does not prove much, for there are many ways to show that one act excels another, i.e., that one act is more perfect than another, other than the remoteness from matter. Moreover, the intellectual soul essentially possesses the dual capability of being able to exist independently from matter, and at the same time, like an inferior form, being able to exist “perfectly united with matter.”⁴⁵⁴ Both of these abilities are had by the intellectual soul essentially. These abilities, to exist independently from matter and to be united with matter are defined independently of each other and are not contradictories. Thus, Scotus claims, that in like manner, one could argue that while it is true that the angel can exist without matter more perfectly than the intellectual soul, that the angel is able to do so would not in itself preclude it from existing in matter. As the second argument above showed, the ability to exist in matter or not is an intrinsic ability part of the essence of a being. The angel, by its very nature, is essentially unable to exist in matter. What distinguishes the intellectual soul from the angel is an essential difference that defines their relationship to matter, in this case, how remote each is from matter. Thus, the remoteness of matter does not in itself offer conclusive evidence to show that the angel cannot be an informing form. An interesting point that emerges from Scotus’ treatment of this argument concerns the distinction between being dependent on matter and being united with matter. Whereas the dependency on matter is imperfection, Scotus contends that it is not clear that the ability to be united with matter or to communicate actuality to matter is. The angel clearly, in no way, depends on matter. However, that the angel would be able to communicate

⁴⁵⁴ *Quodl.* 9.16 [6]: “. . . imo anima intellectiva, licet possit esse sine materia: tamen ita perfecte potest uniri materiae sicut aliqua forma inferior; . . .”

actuality to matter is not necessarily an imperfection.⁴⁵⁵ The intellectual soul being able to exist independently from matter is also able to be perfectly united with matter. Not only is it the case that the perfection of the form that is able to exist independently of matter is in no way diminished by the ability to “communicate actuality” to matter, but the distinction between dependency on matter and being united with matter that Scotus draws out here provides a way into understanding how the intellectual soul does exist in a perfect unity with the body.

What Scotus offers here goes beyond Aristotle’s treatment of the intellective soul. Aristotle, as seen in Chapter 1, holds that the intellectual soul is separable from the body and does not depend upon the body for its operations. But Aristotle does not show how the intellectual soul is then capable of existing united with the body, the nature of that existence, or how in being separable and independent of the body is able to work with the body especially in terms of the fact that Aristotle claims that without the images provided through sensation there would be no thought.

To solve these issues, Scotus focuses his attention on the nature of the essence and essential properties. At a very fundamental level of the being of any individual entity exists a more definite structure than Aristotle understood. That Scotus works so hard to show that the fact that an angel cannot be made into an informing form because by its nature it is essentially repugnant to being united with matter, shows that Scotus sees that at a fundamental level lies an intricate structure and it is this structure that must be understood in order to explain the unity of the individual being, and in particular, the soul-body composite.

⁴⁵⁵ *Quodl.* 9.16 [6]: “. . . non tamen est evidens, quod posse communicare actualitatem suam materiae sit imperfectionis; . . .”

3.3.4 Fourth Argument – Intellectual Function

The fourth argument in question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* that Scotus considers concerning whether an angel can be an informing form derives from the characteristic function of the angel, which is understanding.⁴⁵⁶ The argument claims that since the act of understanding is itself an immaterial potency, then that which understands, the intellectual nature, must itself be immaterial.⁴⁵⁷ To prove that the activity of understanding is immaterial, Scotus argues that the nature of the agent's faculty as the proximate ground of the activity determines the nature of the activity.⁴⁵⁸ If the faculty is material, then its activity cannot be immaterial.⁴⁵⁹ The angel's faculty is immaterial, thus, its activity is immaterial. The problem that emerges here concerns the nature of the immateriality of the intellectual soul. If it is the immateriality of the angel, due to its intellectual nature, that precludes it from being united with matter, then how can it be shown that the intellectual soul, which as an intellectual nature engages in the same immaterial act of understanding, is able to be united with matter? Scotus analyzes three ways in which the intellectual soul can be understood as immaterial.

⁴⁵⁶ *Quodl.* 9.17 [7]: “Quarta ratio videtur sumi, secundum aliquos, ex operatione Angeli, quae est intelligere;”

⁴⁵⁷ *Quodl.* 9.17 [7]: “. . . intelligere est operatio immaterialis: ergo intellectus est potentia immaterialis: et ulterius, ergo natura intellectualis est natura immaterialis.”

⁴⁵⁸ *Quodl.* 9.17 [7]: “. . . operatio enim inest operanti secundum potentiam propriam, ut secundum rationem proximam operandi”

⁴⁵⁹ *Quodl.* 9.17 [7]: “. . . et per consequens, si potentia sit materialis, illa operatio non est immaterialis.”

The first argument that Scotus considers is based on the claim that the intellectual soul does not require a bodily organ to carry out its operations.⁴⁶⁰ In this way, intellection differs from sensation which is organic, i.e., each sense requires a particular bodily organ, a distinct part of the body structured in a specific way.⁴⁶¹ Scotus claims, however, that the fact that intellection requires no organ does not in itself support the claim that intellection is immaterial.⁴⁶² Scotus offers fire as a counterexample. Fire is a material form whose operation is non organic, “provided it be uniformly in the whole and in each part thereof,” (*dum tamen sit uniformis in toto et in qualibet parte*).⁴⁶³

Scotus, however, then considers the nature of the soul as the principle of organic life. As the principle of organic life, the soul does require not a particular or determined part of the body, but a body as whole which is able to carry out diverse actions.⁴⁶⁴ As the principle of organic life, the soul is somehow unlimited in its actions. It requires a body that has unlike parts by means of which these actions can be exercised. Alluntis and

⁴⁶⁰ *Quodl.* 9.26 [9]: Ibid. While it is my interest here to offer a reading of Scotus’ arguments in the *Quodlibetal Questions*, it should be noted that Scotus gives arguments for the immateriality of soul in the *Oxon.* See *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2. Scotus here argues that intellective knowledge transcends every form of sense knowledge and offers three proofs to support this claim: first, intellective knowledge is non-organic, second, we possess some immaterial knowledge, and third, we are able to will in such a way that we can determine ourselves freely. In the second proof he considers three definitions of immateriality that are in some way parallel to the three that he offers in question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*: first, immateriality means non-organic, second immateriality means non-extended, and third, immateriality refers to the object which is itself immaterial. I will return to this third definition of immateriality in section 3.4 of this chapter. See Cross 2003, 263-267 for a clear discussion where these two texts are compared.

⁴⁶¹ *Quodl.* 9.26 [9]: “Uno modo per oppositum ad operationes sensitivas, quae dicuntur organicae, quia exercentur per organa determinata et sic materiales, quae requirunt determinatam partem corporis determinate complexionatam et per oppositum intellectio est operatio non organica.”

⁴⁶² *Quodl.* 9.26 [10]: “Sed ex isto intellectu antecedentis non videtur sequi immaterialitas formae .”

⁴⁶³ *Quodl.* 9.26 [10]: “Forma enim pure materialis, dum tamen sit uniformis in toto et in qualibet parte, non dicitur operari per organum, sicut ignis non dicitur operari per organum.”

⁴⁶⁴ *Quodl.* 9.26 [10]: “Virtus autem formativa non agit per membrum proprium, et ratio huius est, quia illa sola forma dicitur principium operandi organice, quae scilicet quodammodo ilimitata in agendo otest esse principium difformium actionum, quae tamen non possunt elici, nisi mediantibus partibus dissimilibus, et ideo requiritur, quod perfectibile a tali forma habeat partes dissimiles, per quas operationes illae organicae exercentur, et talis forma est priorie sola ania, quae propter sui perfectionem, ultra formas inferiores potest esse principium plurium operationum per ipsam convenientium suo toti, et ideo requirit pro suo perfectibili adaequato corpus habens partes maioris dissimilitudinis, quae conveniunt pluribus operationibus dissimilibus, quarum potest esse principium.”

Wolter note that there is an addition in all three manuscripts here. In this addition, Scotus observes that it can be argued that intellection is just as material a function as vision.⁴⁶⁵ Whereas vision is a function of part of the body, intellection would be a function of the whole. Now if the soul is the principle of intellection insofar as it perfects the parts rather than the whole, then it could be said that the finger understands. Consequently, if the whole is just as material as its parts, it follows that this function, which pertains to the form as it is in the whole, is just as material as a function that pertains to a form as it is in a part. Scotus replies that the intellectual soul, which has understanding insofar as it is this sort of unlimited form, actualizes not a part but the whole. Thus, based on this reasoning, the intellectual soul, though it does not require an organ to operate, in actualizing the whole being can be understood as material.

It is clear that Scotus does not consider the inorganic argument to be successful in establishing that because the intellect does not function by way of a specific bodily organ, it is therefore immaterial. But his concerns go beyond this argument to the question of how we could understand the activities of the intellectual soul to be immaterial. Cross points out that in both the *Oxon.* and the *Quodlibetal Questions* Scotus is responding to Aquinas' claim that the immateriality of the soul is proved by the immateriality of the

⁴⁶⁵ I here cite the entirety of the addition to *Quodl.* 9.26 [10] In the Latin text this addition is italicized: *“Imo ex isto intellectu antecedentis videtur posse argui, quod intellectio est operatio aequae materialis, sicut visio: quia visio potest exerceri per partem materialem determinatam: intellectio autem non per aliquam partem, sed est totius primo: non enim manus intelligit, sed homo: sed si anima non ut perficiens totum possit esse principium intelligendi ergo ipsa ut perficiens quamcunque partem aequae posset esse principium intelligendi, sicut ipsa, ut perficiens totius, et tunc dici posset ita digitus intelligere, sicut homo, quia ita digitus esset in actu per formam, et et principium intelligendi. Si ergo totum ex aequae materiale sicut pars, vel magis sequiritur quod ista operatio, qua non competit formae unisi ut est in toto sit aequae materialis, sicut illa qua sibi competit ut est in parte. Respondeo ad hoc, operatio quae competit formae, ut est quodammodo illimitata perfectio, si communicetur materiae et toti, communicatur ei, quod est in actu per formam sic illimitatam tale est totum et non aliqua pars eius respectu anima intellectiva cui ut sic illimitata est competit intellectio.*

operation of the soul.⁴⁶⁶ Cross observes that Scotus recognizes an ambiguity in Aquinas' use of the word "immateriality" and thus responds in both texts by offering several different meanings. But it seems to me that it is not Aquinas, nor the ambiguity in the use of immateriality that primarily motivates Scotus here. Rather, there seem to be at least two problems at issue: first, how the intellect as immaterial is able to be united with the material body, and second, how the intellect functions with the body, i.e., is able to access the images provided by way of sensation and imagination.

For example, Scotus considers the argument based on angels' characteristic function, namely, understanding. From this it is argued that understanding is an immaterial function, and therefore the intellect is immaterial.⁴⁶⁷ Scotus points out that our soul is not purely intellectual, like the Angel, for it does depend on matter for some of its operations.⁴⁶⁸ Considering Scotus' counterexample of the soul as the principle of life in the inorganic argument, as well as the argument in the addition, both make clear that even given that the intellect does not operate through a specific bodily organ, it is hard to see how the soul does not function by way of the whole human composite. By no means does Scotus here reject the immateriality of the soul, but his concerns about its functioning with the body are certainly revealed.

He considers two additional ways in which immateriality could be understood. The second way in which understanding could be understood as immaterial concerns the object of understanding. The process of understanding is intentional in that it "tends

⁴⁶⁶ Cross 2003, 263-264.

⁴⁶⁷ *Quodl.* 9.17 [7]: "secundum aliquos, ex operatione Angeli, quae est intelligere; et hoc sic: intelligere est operatio immaterialis: ergo intellectus est potentia immaterialis." Scotus here cites Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 50, a. 2.

⁴⁶⁸ *Quodl.* 9.19 [7]: "non sic manifeste tenet de natura, quae est diminute intellectualis; et cum hoc sensitiva quantum ad aliquam potentiam sicut ex anima nostra quia illa dependet a materia in operando, saltem aliqua operatione, sed natura mere intellectualis nullo modo deperdet a materia in operando."

towards an object abstracted from matter.”⁴⁶⁹ Since the object of understanding is that which itself is abstracted from matter, the understanding itself must be immaterial according to what Scotus earlier argued: 9.21:

. . . every act gets its specification and perfection from its object. But the object of intellect qua intellect abstracts from matter, because the forms in matter are all individual but the intellect does not grasp them as individual.⁴⁷⁰

Scotus rejects this argument. He argues that the immateriality of the object is not enough to prove that understanding itself is immaterial.⁴⁷¹ Scotus observes that everyone agrees that that the object of understanding is indeed the quiddity of the material object.⁴⁷² But Scotus argues:

. . . if all that is required [to prove the claim “to understand is immaterial”] is to have immateriality in the object, i.e., abstraction from individual matter, then the operation of our intellect is immaterial terminatively, because it is indifferent to singular material objects.⁴⁷³

Scotus argues that if it is to be shown that understanding is immaterial then what truly has to be proved is that the operation by which the universal is thought is an operation that cannot be communicated to matter.⁴⁷⁴ He offers no such argument here.

The third way in which understanding might be shown to be immaterial pertains to the nature of that which receives the object of intellection. What is the proper recipient subject of intellection is the form and not the matter. Moreover, Scotus clarifies, it is not

⁴⁶⁹ *Quodl.* 9.27 [11]: “. . . hoc est, tendit in obiectum abstractum a materia”

⁴⁷⁰ *Quodl.* 9.21 [7]: “. . . quia ab obiecto actus quilibet recipit speciem, et perfectionem; nunc autem obiectum intellectus, in quantum huiusmodi, a materia abstrahitur; quia formae in materia sunt individuales; quas non apprehendit, secundum quod huiusmodi.”

⁴⁷¹ *Quodl.* 9.27 [11]: “. . . sed ista probatio non concludi immaterialitatem simpliciter, etiam terminative, sive obiective,”

⁴⁷² *Quodl.* 9.27 [11]: “. . . quia secundum omnes quiditas rei materialis potest esse per se obiectum intellectus nostri.”

⁴⁷³ *Quodl.* 9.27 [11]: “. . . sed tantummodo, si requiritur in obiecto immaterialitas, hoc est, abstrahitur a materia individuali, et ex hoc sequitur quod operatio sit immaterialis terminative, hoc est, indifferens ad obiecta singularia materialia,”

⁴⁷⁴ *Quodl.* 9.27 [11]: “. . . et tunc ad habendum conclusionem intentam, oportet probare quod operatio, quae respicit universale pro obiecto, non posset aliquo modo communicari materiae.”

the form of the whole, that is, the form of the composite human being, but the form of the part, that is, of the soul, which participates in the whole that receives the object of understanding.⁴⁷⁵ The intellective soul, and not something material, is what receives the object of understanding.

In this way it is clear how sensation and intellection are different cognitive activities. In sensation, what receives the form of the sensible object is what is composed of both matter and form, i.e., the sense organ. The sense organ is the bodily organ endowed with a sense power. The example that Scotus gives is of the eye and the power of sight. In order to see an object it is not enough to have an eye but that eye must be endowed with the power of sight. Thus, Scotus explains, it is “the form of the organ as a whole which is the proximate ground for receiving the vision, like humanity is the form of man as a whole.”⁴⁷⁶ A sense organ endowed with the sense power is the proximate ground of sensation because as such it is “composed of the soul as the principle of the operation and of a part of the body structured in a certain way.”⁴⁷⁷ The power of sensation, in other words, is by its very nature dependent on the material sense organ. So when it is said that the power of sense is the recipient of the form of the sensible object, what is meant is the power of sense as it is the form of the organ as a whole, both the specific material structure and the soul (form) that actualizes it.

⁴⁷⁵ *Quodl.* 9.28 [11]: “. . . intellectio non est primi aliotrius materialis tanquam proximi receptivi, sed eius receptivum proximum et proprium est form, non illa totius, quae est quiditas, sicut est humanitas, sed illa, quae est simplex, et altera pars compositi.”

⁴⁷⁶ *Quodl.* 9.28 [11]: “. . . sed forma totius organi eo modo quo humanitas est forma totius hominis, est proxima ratio recipiendi visionem.”

⁴⁷⁷ *Quodl.* 9.29 [11]: “Ex hoc patet, quod si organum dicatur illa pars totius animalis, in qua tanquam in proximo receptivo, recipitur sensatio, organum dicetur esse aliquid compositum ex anima, ut est principium talis operationis, et ex parte corporis sic mixta. . .”

In terms of intellection, however, what receives the object of understanding is itself immaterial:

In the case of understanding, however, we have just the opposite, for its proximate subject and formal ground for its reception is the soul or some portion of the soul which has no matter.”⁴⁷⁸

What makes understanding immaterial is not simply that it is not organic nor that its object is immaterial but rather that only part of the human composite receives the intellectual object. What appears to guide Scotus here is the fact that the intellectual soul can exist apart from the body such that when it is separate from the body, it is still able to understand. If the soul can understand when it is separated from the body, then understanding itself does not depend on the material body.⁴⁷⁹ Thus, the proximate recipient of intellection must be immaterial. Scotus considers this argument the one that comes closest to the truth.⁴⁸⁰ But he qualifies even this. Much of what this third argument establishes is that since understanding is immaterial, and the human being understands, then we find a dual commonality shared by the intellectual soul and the angel, namely, they share the same sort of intellection from which it can be inferred that they have the same sort of immateriality, namely, being able to exist independently from matter.⁴⁸¹ However, Scotus observes that this argument does not justify that the intellectual soul, given its immateriality, cannot inform matter.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁸ *Quodl.* 9.29 [11]: “Per oppositum est de intellectione, quia receptivum eius proximum, et proxima ratio formalis recipiendi eam est anima, vel aliquid ex parte animae praecise, non includendo aliquam materiam. . .”

⁴⁷⁹ *Quodl.* 9.30 [12]: “. . . intelligere est operatio immaterialis quia proximum receptivum habet non includens materia, saltem corporalem, et ideo sine tali materia potest ipsa operatio haberi, nunc autem potens habere operationem sine materia potest habere esse sine materia, ergo natura illa, cuius est ista operatio propria, potest habere esse sine materia.”

⁴⁸⁰ *Quodl.* 9.30 [12]: “Secundum etiam istum tertium intellectum, qui plus continet veritatis. . .”

⁴⁸¹ *Quodl.* 9.30 [12]: “Et hoc ergo medio, scilicet operatione, potest concludi ipsius naturae talis immaterialitas, hoc est, a materia in essendo separabilitas: non autem illa immaterialitas ulterior, quae est

In Question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* Scotus concerns himself with the question of whether the angel can be an informing form. Through the four arguments that have been examined, it is clear that the Angel cannot be such a form. By way of this examination of the case of the Angel, Scotus is able to show the complexity of the case of the intellectual soul. Against the similarities shared by the soul and the Angel, their distinctiveness is made clear. The issue for Scotus is how to reconcile the seemingly opposite characteristics of being able to exist in the material body and being able to exist apart from it. What lies at the crux of the matter is the nature of immateriality and how the soul relates to the body in terms of function. What we can take from this discussion concerning the three ways in which immateriality can be conceived is while Scotus seems not to be wholly satisfied with any of them, he offers valuable insights that will serve the discussion of cognition in Chapter 4. I will now attend to the question of the personhood of the human being, not only as that which most fully expresses the unity of the human being, but that which makes cognition possible.

3.4 The Nature of the Human Being as Person

In his discussion on the third sense of *per se* being, the *suppositum*, Scotus makes the interesting claim, in two different places, that a subsistent individual that has an intellectual nature is a person.⁴⁸³ It is clear that what Scotus has in mind are the divine persons of the Trinity, the angel, and the body-soul composite of the human being. As

impossibilitas informandi materiam, et hoc est rationabile, quod est intellectione, quae est medium, et commune animae et Angelo, possit concludi immaterialitas communis utrique.”

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ *Quodl.* 9.7 [3]: “. . . et in natura intellectuali dicitur persona. . .” and 9.12 [4]: “. . . in natura autem intellectuali dicitur persona. . .”

we saw, the intellective soul alone is not a person, the subsisting individual human being is. He clarifies what he means by person:

Thus a person is incommunicable, because it is repugnant to him that he be communicated not only as a universal is communicated to its singulars but also as a form is communicable to the matter to be actualized through it.⁴⁸⁴

Certainly a person is incommunicable because she possesses all of the characteristics of a *suppositum*, the third sense of *per se* being. She is incommunicable because she is a subsisting, whole, individual. What does she possess that makes her a distinct kind of *suppositum*, a person? What feature does the intellective soul possess such that when joined to the body, the human being is understood as a person?

To answer these questions on the unity of the human being and the feature of the intellective soul that endows the human composite with personhood, I will turn to two passages, one in the *Quodlibetal Questions* and the other in the *Oxon*. In both passages, Scotus attends to the cognitive activity of intellectual awareness.

In Question 6 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Scotus explains the intellectual awareness that an Angel has. He writes:

Such knowledge of the existent qua existent and present is something an angel has about himself. For Michael does not know himself in the way he would know Gabriel if Gabriel were annihilated, viz., by abstractive cognition, but he knows himself as existing and as existing in a way that is identical with himself. He is also ware of his intellection in this way if he reflects upon it, considering it not just as any object in which one has abstracted from existence or non-existence in the way he would think of another angel's knowledge, if such did not actually exist; rather he knows himself to be knowing, that is to say he knows his knowledge as something existing in himself. This knowledge possible for

⁴⁸⁴ *Quodl.* 9.12 [4]: “. . . et sic est persona incommunicabilis quia sibi repugnat communicari, non tantum ut universale, singularibus, sed ut forma materiae actuandae per ipsam.”

an angel, therefore is also simply possible for our intellective power, because we have the promise that we shall be like angels.⁴⁸⁵

The knowledge that Scotus is concerned about here is the knowledge of self. The angel, and thus, the human being, is able to know herself to be knowing. This activity is unique and peculiar to intellectual natures. This is the feature of the intellectual nature that endows the divine person, the angel, or the human being with personhood.

In the *Oxon.* where Scotus discusses the different meanings of immateriality, he argues that immateriality can be understood in reference to the object, “inasmuch as this knowledge considers the object under immaterial aspects, as for instance, abstracting from the “here and now” and such like, which are said to be material conditions.”⁴⁸⁶

While Scotus claims that this proof is based on the object, it is the activity of conscious reflection that grounds it. The proof rests on the fact that “we experience ourselves reflecting on this act of knowledge.”⁴⁸⁷ Reflection is activity exclusive to an immaterial nature, as Scotus contends that what has quantity is unable to reflect.⁴⁸⁸ The proof that he gives amounts to a listing of all the objects that transcend sense knowledge. But what is striking about the list is not the eight objects, it is the fact that Scotus begins each listing

⁴⁸⁵ *Quodl.* 6.19[8]: “. . . talem autem actum cognitionis de existente, ut existens, et praesens est, habet Angelus de se. Non tantum enim intelligit Michael se, eo modo, quo intelligeret Gabrielem, si Gabriel annihilaretur intellectione, scilicet abstrativa: sed intelligi se, ut existentem, et ut existentem eundem sibi: sic etiam intelligit suam intellectionem, si reflectatur supream, non solum considerando intellectionem, sicut quoddam obiectum abstractum ab existentia, et non existentia: quia sic intelligit intellectionem alterius Angeli, si nulla intellectio eius esset, sed intelligit se intelligere, hoc est, intellectionem sibi inexistentem: ergo ista intellectio possibilis Angelo est possibilis simpliciter intellectivae nostrae: quia promittitur nobis, quod erimus aequales Angelis.”

⁴⁸⁶ *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2: “Tertio modo potest intelligi immaterialitas eius in comparatione ad obiectum, ut scilicet respiciat obiectum sub rationibus immaterialibus, utote in quantum abstrahitur ab hic et nunc et huiusmodi, quae dicuntur conditiones materiales.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 141.

⁴⁸⁷ *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2: “. . . experimur nos reflecti super actum istius cognitionis, . . .” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 141.

⁴⁸⁸ *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2: “. . . quantum non est super se reflexivum. . .” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 141.

of each object with “We experience. . . (*Experimur*).”⁴⁸⁹ He ends this litany of reflective experience with the contention that if anyone denies that she has such experiences, she ought to be told that she is a brute animal.⁴⁹⁰ A brute animal is not a person. It is by way of internal perception (*perceptione interiori*) that we experience these acts in ourselves.⁴⁹¹ I want to argue that the feature that endows the intellectual nature with personhood is the activity of reflection, the knowledge of the self. How does the activity of reflection, in particular, secure the unity of the human being? In both of the passages discussed above, what allows the reflection to occur is the presence of some object to the intellect. Such a presence is the occasion by which the intellect knows of its knowing and thus knows of itself. In terms of the human being, in this life, it is only by way of sensation that there is an object that can be made present to the intellect. Through the sensitive and intellectual activities of the soul, which are formally distinct, the unity of the human being is realized. Wolter observes that, for Scotus, the human being, in this life, enjoys a psychic unity. What underlies this unity is the harmonic cooperation between the soul and body.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁹ *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2.

⁴⁹⁰ *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2: “Si quis autem proterve neget istos actus inesse homini, nec se experiri istos actus in se, non est ulterius cum eo disputandum, sed dicendum est sibi quod est brutum; . . .” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 141.

⁴⁹¹ *Oxon.* 4, d. 43, q. 2: “Ita quod quodam sensu, id est, perceptione interiori, experimur istos actus in nobis.” *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Wolter 1987, 141.

⁴⁹² Wolter 1940, 293. In a footnote where Wolter explains that while Scotus might at some level agree with Augustine that the union of the soul with the body, in this life, is a result of sin, Scotus argues that this union of the soul and the body is “demanded by the very nature of our soul’s varied and complex faculties taken as a whole.” Scotus claims, “non solum ex peccato sed natura potentialium pro statu isto.” *Oxon.* 2, d. 3, q. 8, n. 13; XII, 195. This is in accord with what Scotus says in Question 9 of the Quodlibetal Questions as discussed above. Wolter further explains, “To permit the intellectual soul to function in complete independence of the senses would destroy the harmony and unity of man’s psychic life.” It seems to me that this emphasis on the harmonic cooperation between the soul and the body, or between the faculties of sensation and intellection is evidence of the deep influence of Aristotle on Scotus. Wolter quotes again from Scotus, *Oxon.* 4, d. 45, q. 2, n. 14; XX, 306: “. . . etsi cognition posit acquire per usum sensuum et per alium modum ab anima separate, non frustra fit unio . . . Unio animae ad corpus non est finaliter propter perfectionem totius consistentis ex istis partibus; et ideo licet nulla perfectio posit accrescere huic parti vel illi, quae non posset haberi sine tali unione, tamen non fit frustra unio, quia perfectio totus, quae principaliter intenditur a natura, non posset haberi nisi illo modo.”

Thus, it is the idea of the knowing self that best explains the notion of person and expresses and secures at the same time the unity of the human being.

Conclusion

The points to be taken from this discussion are as follows. First, unity is coextensive with being such that every level of being has its own proper unity. The unity of singularity is the highest expression of unity and is that by which all other unity is measured. The unity of the singularity seals the integrity of the individual being. Second, the unity of the human being is a substantial unity, that is, a unity made up of form and matter. When form informs matter a whole new individual being is brought about with characteristics different from its components. Scotus contends that a plurality of forms exists in the individual human being, the intellectual soul, the form of the body and the forms of the bodily organs. This plurality of forms does not threaten the unity of the human being, rather it makes it possible in that the human being is a person, a suppositum with an intellectual nature. The intellectual part of the soul has formally distinct parts that require a diverse and complex body. When the soul is conjoined to the body, it is the activity as a whole composite, the harmonic cooperation between sensation and intellection, that secures the unity of the person. Moreover, the intellectual part of the soul acts through the whole individual. Third, in his discussion of accident, Scotus shows that inherence is not of the essence of the accident. Not only does this help to show how the sensible and intelligible species as accident can be present in the bodily organs or the intellect, but it also provides a way to understand the complexity of the intellectual soul, which can exist independently from the body and exist conjoined to it.

Fourth, the immateriality of the soul--that it can exist independently from the body--does not preclude its existence in the body. What emerges from this discussion is that Scotus is thoroughly Aristotelian in his understanding of the unity of the soul and the body, even given the fact that the immaterial intellect definitely can exist apart from the body. The distinction between the soul and the body and materiality and immateriality should be understood in terms of the underlying unity of the whole substantial being. Thus, the problem of the immaterial intellect working with the material sense faculties is not Descartes' mind-body problem.

Chapter 4 Sense Cognition

In Chapter three I examined Scotus' understanding of the relationship of the body and soul. My discussion focused on Scotus' understanding of the human being as a person. The notion of person is reserved for per se beings with an intellectual nature. Given that the human being is a composite of a soul and a body, through the notion of person, Scotus is able to account for the intimate connection and the cooperation of the body and soul. In this chapter I will now turn to the question of how phantasm is an entity that the agent intellect is able to access, that is to act with in order to make the intelligible species present to the intellect. I am not concerned here with the nature of the activity of the agent intellect with the phantasm, i.e., with the process that has come to be known as abstraction. I am concerned with what happens prior to this activity in the process of sensation in order to come to understand the nature of the species or phantasm and the manner in which it exists in the bodily organ.

Since Scotus accepts that knowledge begins in the senses, that the intellect is unable to think without the phantasm but that the phantasm itself cannot be an object for the intellect as it exists in material conditions, i.e., in a bodily organ and under the aspect of singularity, the question arises as to the nature of the phantasm as a species such that the agent intellect is able to attend to it, not as its object, but as that which it can act with to produce the intelligible species. The phantasm is a species or likeness of an object that comes to exist in a bodily organ, the internal sense memory, by way of the activity of the senses, both external and internal. But the phantasm alone is not able to account for the universality of intellectual knowledge, so the agent intellect must somehow work with the

phantasm to produce an intelligible species.⁴⁹³ Since the phantasm is primarily produced by way of sensation, it is Scotus' account of sensation that is the primary concern of this chapter. Since Scotus has been seen as basically endorsing the traditional account of sensation, there is not much in the literature that details his account of sensation. This chapter is divided into two parts. In part 4.1, I will discuss Thomas Aquinas' account of sensation. I use Aquinas' account as a point of comparison and contrast to Scotus, thus, in this first section I will give a detailed analysis of Aquinas' distinction between natural and spiritual change. In part 4.2, I will discuss Scotus' account of sensation. The organization of my discussion on Scotus is based on the questions that emerge from my discussion on Aquinas. In addressing these questions I will be able to show not only the ways in which Scotus is like and unlike Aquinas, but more importantly, I will be able to detail unique elements of Scotus' account of sensation helpful in understanding the nature of the phantasm..

4.1 Thomas Aquinas' Account of Sensation

As discussed in Chapter 1, Aristotle claims that the cognitive process begins with the senses. He explains sensation in the context of his metaphysics of potency and act such that the process of sensation, as well as intellection, is a kind of being affected.⁴⁹⁴ In sense perception, that which is actual acts upon the sense bringing about a some kind of change.⁴⁹⁵ The sense is that potency or power which receives the sensible form without

⁴⁹³ Tachau 1988, 59. Tachau explains here that Scotus rejects Henry of Ghent's view that there is no need for the intelligible species. Henry of Ghent thought that the phantasm was sufficient.

⁴⁹⁴ *De Anima* 424a1: "Sentire enim est aliquod pati quoquo modo."

⁴⁹⁵ *De Anima* 416b33-35: "Dicamus igitur quod sentire accidit secundum motum et passionem, sicut diximus; existimatur enim quod est aliqua alteratio."

the matter.⁴⁹⁶ Aristotle uses the example of wax receiving the impression of a signet ring without the bronze to explain sense perception.⁴⁹⁷ Thus, for Aristotle, what defines the nature of sensitive cognition is passivity.

This passivity that defines Aristotle's cognitive process became a subject of debate in the late 13th and early 14th century, stemming from Boethius' claims that cognition is active.⁴⁹⁸ According to Robert Pasnau, a disagreement arose concerning whether or not Aristotle's cognitive framework could account for such an activity as Boethius argues for on the part of the senses and intellect.⁴⁹⁹ To frame his own discussion of Thomas Aquinas, Pasnau presents the positions of Peter John Olivi and William of Ockham as the extreme sides of this debate, although they are not the only ones who argued these positions.⁵⁰⁰ According to Pasnau, Olivi, siding with Augustine that there must be an active focus by the cognizing power on its object, explicitly attacks the Aristotelian dictum that cognition is a kind of being affected.⁵⁰¹ Olivi argues that the mere reception of the form by the sense or the intellect cannot itself account for cognition. Rather, Olivi contends that the sense and the intellect must be doing something

⁴⁹⁶ *De Anima* 424a16-19: "Et dicendum est universaliter de omni sensu quod sensus est recipiens formas sensibilium sine materia;" *De Anima* 425b24: "... sentiens enim recipit sensibile extra materiam quidlibet quodlibet."

⁴⁹⁷ *De Anima* 424a19-23: "... quod cera recipit formam anuli sine ferro aut auro, et recipit signum quod est ex cupro aut ex auro, sed non secundum quod est cuprum aut aurum."

⁴⁹⁸ Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 125.

⁴⁹⁹ Pasnau, 1997, 125.

⁵⁰⁰ For example, Pasnau points out elsewhere that Godfrey of Fontaines also argued for the complete passivity of the whole cognitive process. According to Godfrey, the phantasm is what causes cognition; the possible intellect merely receives the impression. See Pasnau 2003, 291. See also, Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodlibeta* 8.2, 9.19, 10.12, 13.3; John Wippel, "The Role of the Phantasm in Godfrey of Fontaines' Theory of Intellection" in *L'homme et son univers au moyen age. Actes du septième congrès international de philosophie médiévale* (30 août--4 septembre 1982), vol. 2 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1986), 573-582.

⁵⁰¹ Pasnau 1997, 130-131. Pasnau cites the following texts: Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, ed. Jansen, three volumes, 1922-26, q. 58 ad 14; II, 482: "Aristoteles nulla sufficienti ratione, immo fere nulla ratione probat suum dictum, sed absque ratione creditur sibi tanquam huius saeculi;" Augustine, *I Soliloquies* ch. 6: "... ut oculos sanos habeat, ut aspiciat et ut videat." It is interesting to note here that Olivi points out that Augustine is often inconsistent in his views on cognition. Nevertheless, Scotus makes the same appeal to Augustine in terms of the activity of sensation.

more than receiving for cognition to occur.⁵⁰² It is not passivity that explains cognition, but an attentive activity on the part of the sense or intellect that can account for cognition. William of Ockham, according to Pasnau, argues within the Aristotelian framework for the other extreme, namely, that cognition is entirely passive.⁵⁰³ Pasnau contends that Scotus is influenced by Olivi and attempts “a broadly Aristotelian resolution” that is a compromise between these two extreme views.⁵⁰⁴ Before turning to Scotus, it is helpful as a point of similarity and contrast to Scotus, to consider Thomas Aquinas’ position in some detail since his position is, like Scotus’, an intermediate position between the extreme positions of Olivi and Ockham.⁵⁰⁵

In his *Commentary on De Anima*, Aquinas readily accepts Aristotle’s characterization of all sensation as the reception of the sensible form without the matter.⁵⁰⁶ However, he notes that the reception of form without matter is not unique to sensation:

But this seems to be common to all patients. In fact, all patients receive something by the agent according to what the agent is. The agent, however, acts through its form, and not through its matter. Therefore, all patients receive the form without the matter. And so it is the case with the sense. Air does not receive the matter from fire as an agent, but its form. Therefore, it seems that the reception of the species or form without matter is not proper to the sense.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰² Pasnau 1997, 132-134.

⁵⁰³ Pasnau 1997, 126. Pasnau points out here that Ockham is not the only thinker who had such a view, Godfrey of Fontaines also understood cognition as passive.

⁵⁰⁴ Pasnau 1997, 125-126.

⁵⁰⁵ Pasnau 1997, See chapters 2 and 4 for Pasnau’s extended argument, pp. 63-85 and 125-160, respectively.

⁵⁰⁶ Aquinas, *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24, n. 1: “Dicit ergo primo quod hoc oportet accipere, universaliter et communiter omni sensui inesse, quod sensus est susceptivus specierum sine materia, sicut cera recipit signum anuli sine ferro et auro.” All Latin quotes taken from: Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Sentencia libri De anima*, Textum Taurini 1959 editum.

⁵⁰⁷ Aquinas, *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24, n. 1: “Sed hoc videtur esse commune omni patienti. Omne enim patiens recipit aliquid ab agente secundum quod est agens. Agens autem agit per suam formam, et non per suam materiam: omne igitur patiens recipit formam sine materia. Et hoc etiam ad sensum apparet: non enim aer recipit ab igne agente, materiam eius sed formam: non igitur videtur hoc proprium esse sensus, quod sit receptivus specierum sine materia.” (my translation)

Aquinas finds the difference between the change involved in sensation and other change in terms of the way in which the form is received (*in modo recipiendi*) by the patient.⁵⁰⁸ In some cases, the form is received by the patient according to the same mode of being (*eumdem modum essendi*) that the form had in the agent.⁵⁰⁹ Aquinas explains that, in this case, the matter of the patient comes to be disposed in the same way as the matter of the agent.⁵¹⁰ Thus, Aquinas says that this should not be understood as a reception of form without matter.⁵¹¹ He does not mean that matter is received along with the form by the patient. Rather, what he means is that in some cases, the matter of the patient is itself affected by the reception of the form such that, as Burnyeat explains, the patient “becomes like the agent both in matter and in form.”⁵¹² Thus, a natural change (*passione naturali*) is a material change, matter comes to be disposed in a different way. Aquinas offers as an example of a natural change the warming of air.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁸ *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24 n. 2: “Dicendum igitur, quod licet hoc sit omni patienti, quod recipiat formam ab agente, differentia tamen est in modo recipiendi.” See also Burnyeat 2003, 148. Burnyeat contends that the task of Aristotelian psychology is “to differentiate [cognitive assimilation] from ordinary alteration while staying within the framework of Aristotelian physics.” Burnyeat sees Aristotle taking a negative approach. For instance, in order to define perception Aristotle simply subtracts the underlying material process. He contends that Aquinas adopts this same approach in order to demarcate an unordinary physical change, which is perception. I think this is a helpful way to understand Aquinas’ project. Aquinas differentiates between the way in which the form is received in order to show how in perception the form is received in a manner different from ordinary change.

⁵⁰⁹ *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24, n. 2: “Nam forma, quae in patiente recipitur ab agente, quandoque quidem habet eumdem modum essendi in patiente, quem habet in agente. . .”

⁵¹⁰ *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24, n. 2: “. . .et hoc quidem contingit, quando patiens habet eamdem dispositionem ad formam, quam habet agens: quodcumque enim recipitur in altero secundum modum recipientis recipitur. Unde si eodem modo disponatur patiens sicut agens, eodem modo recipitur forma in patiente sicut erat in agente. . .”

⁵¹¹ *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24, n. 2: “. . .et tunc non recipitur forma sine materia.”

⁵¹² Burnyeat 2001, 140. Burnyeat characterizes this change as receiving form with matter. Aquinas only says that this is not the reception of form without matter. Burnyeat is emphasizing that the case of natural change, the matter of the recipient comes to be disposed in the same way as the matter of the agent. The matter of the agent is not being received by the patient.

⁵¹³ *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24, n. 2: “Licet enim illa et eadem materia numero quae est agentis, non fiat patientis, fit tamen quodammodo eadem, in quantum similem dispositionem materialem ad formam acquirit ei quae erat in agente. Et hoc modo aer patitur ab igne, et quicquid patitur passione naturali.”

In other cases, however, the form is received by the patient according to a different mode of being (*alium modum essendi*) than it had in the agent:

Sometimes a form is received in the thing affected in keeping with a manner of existence different from the agent's, because the affected thing's material disposition for receiving is not like the agent's material disposition. And hence a form is received in the thing affected without matter insofar as the thing affected is made like the agent with respect to form and not matter. And a sense receives a form without matter in this manner because the form has a different manner of existence in the sense and in the sense object: for in the sense object it has a natural existence, whereas in the sense it has intentional or spiritual existence.⁵¹⁴

This change in which the patient is made like the agent in form only is the change peculiar to sensation as characterized by Aristotle as the reception of form without matter. The matter of the patient does not become similarly disposed to the matter of the agent. The form is received by the patient in a way other than a natural change because the existence that it has in the patient is not a natural existence (*esse naturale*) but an intentional or spiritual existence (*esse intentionale et spirituale*). The reception of the form according to intentional existence seems not to affect the matter of the patient. Intentional existence is traditionally associated with cognition or awareness and usually defined as "the existence of being known."⁵¹⁵ Aquinas understands the change in which the form is received by the patient according to intentional existence as a spiritual change.⁵¹⁶ The distinction between natural change and spiritual change allows Aquinas to show how the change involved in perception, while fundamentally the same as other change because all change involves the reception of form without matter, is nonetheless,

⁵¹⁴ *Sententia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 24 n. 3: "Quandoque vero forma recipitur in patiente secundum alium modum essendi, quam sit in agente; quia dispositio materialis patientis ad recipiendum, non est similis dispositioni materiali, quae est in agente. Et ideo forma recipitur in patiente sine materia, in quantum patiens assimilatur agenti secundum formam, et non secundum materiam. Et per hunc modum, sensus recipit formam sine materia, quia alterius modi esse habet forma in sensu, et in re sensibili. Nam in re sensibili habet esse naturale, in sensu autem habet esse intentionale et spirituale." Trans. Pasnau 1997, 39-40.

⁵¹⁵ Sorabji 1991, 243.

⁵¹⁶ Pasnau 1997, 49.

not an ordinary change because the sensible form is received according to intentional being. Turning now to a well-known passage in the *ST*, Aquinas explains sensation:

Sense is a passive power, and is naturally immuted by the exterior sensible. Hence, the exterior cause of such immutation is what is *per se* perceived by the sense, and according to the diversity of that exterior cause are the sensitive powers diversified.⁵¹⁷

It is clear from this passage that Aquinas is thoroughly Aristotelian in his understanding of sensation. He maintains Aristotle's claim that sensation is fundamentally passive and that sensation is a kind of being affected.⁵¹⁸ The diversity of sensible objects requires a diversity of senses such that each sense has its own proper object. Of note here is that Aquinas says here that it is the sense as a passive power that is acted upon or changed by the external sense object. Aquinas clearly regards the power of sense as a power that requires a corporeal organ in order to operate:

But some operations of the soul are performed by means of corporeal organs, as seeing by the eye, and hearing by the ear. And so it is with all the other operations of the nutritive and sensitive parts. Therefore, the powers which are the principles of these operations have their subject in the composite, and not in the soul alone.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁷ Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 78, a. 3: "Est autem sensus quaedam potentia passiva, quae nata est immutari ab exteriori sensibili. Exterior ergo immutativum est quod per se a sensu percipitur, et secundum cuius diversitatem sensitivae potentiae distinguuntur." Trans. Pegis 1945, 328. All Latin quotes from the *ST* are taken from: Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae*, Textum Leoninum, Romae 1889 editum.

⁵¹⁸ See Edward P. Mahoney, "Sense, Intellect, and Imagination in Albert, Thomas, and Siger," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), 605. According to Mahoney, Aquinas "maintains that sense is primarily a passive power, one which is naturally suited to be modified or changed by an external sensible object." See Aquinas, *ST* 1a, 17.2, ad 1: ". . .sensem affici est ipsum eius sentire. . ." and Aquinas, *III Sent.* 14.1.1.2c: "Sed quia sensus non sentit nisi ad praesentiam sensibilis, ideo ad eius operationem perfectam sufficit impressio sui activi per modum passionis tantum. . ."; *Summa Contra Gentiles* II.82.1641: "Non enim sentire est movere, sed magis moveri;"

⁵¹⁹ Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 77, a.5: "Quaedam vero operationes sunt animae, quae exercentur per organa corporalia; sicut visio per oculum, et auditus per aurem. Et simile est de omnibus aliis operationibus nutritivae et sensitivae partis. Et ideo potentiae quae sunt talium operationum principia, sunt in coniuncto sicut in subiecto, et non in anima sola."

What is not clear in the claim that the power of sense is acted upon by the external sensible object, is what is being acted upon or changed. Since the sensitive soul is conjoined to the corporeal organ, then it would seem to follow that the sense organ as composite is what is acted upon. But in the passage from the Commentary on *De Anima*, Aquinas distinguishes between a natural change and a spiritual change in order to show how the change involved in sensation is different from ordinary change, he designates the spiritual change that is involved in sensation. Thus, when the external sensible object acts upon the power of sense such that this is a spiritual change where the sensible form is received according to intentional existence, is this a change that happens to the corporeal organ. It is helpful to consider another passage where Aquinas attends to the kind(s) of change involved in sensation using again the distinction between natural and spiritual that he used in his *Commentary on De Anima*:

Now, immutation is of two kinds, one natural, the other spiritual. Natural immutation takes place when the form of that which causes the immutation is received, according to its natural being, into the thing immuted, as heat is received into the thing heated. But spiritual immutation takes place when the form of what causes the immutation is received, according to a spiritual mode of being, into the thing immuted, as the form of color is received into the pupil which does not thereby become colored. Now, for the operation of the senses, a spiritual immutation is required, whereby an intention of the sensible form is effected in the sensible organ. Otherwise, if a natural immutation alone sufficed for the sense's action, all natural bodies would have sensation when they undergo alteration.⁵²⁰

Aquinas explains that a natural change occurs when the form is received by the changed thing (*immutato*) according to natural being (*esse naturale*). Again, he uses as an

⁵²⁰Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 78, a. 3: "Est autem duplex immutatio, una naturalis, et alia spiritualis. Naturalis quidem, secundum quod forma immutantis recipitur in immutato secundum esse naturale, sicut calor in calefacto. Spiritualis autem, secundum quod forma immutantis recipitur in immutato secundum esse spirituale; ut forma coloris in pupilla, quae non fit per hoc colorata. Ad operationem autem sensus requiritur immutatio spiritualis, per quam *intentio* formae sensibilis fiat in organo sensus. Alioquin, si sola immutatio naturalis sufficeret ad sentiendum, omnia corpora naturalia sentirent dum alterantur." Trans. Pegis 1945, 328-329.

example of natural change the heating of a thing. A spiritual change occurs when the form is received by the changed thing (*immutato*) according to spiritual being (*esse spirituale*). When the pupil receives the form of color, the pupil does not thereby become colored, nonetheless, the form of color comes to exist in the pupil when before it did not exist in the pupil, not according to natural being, but spiritual being. In this passage, Aquinas does not use the word “intentional” to describe change, but only spiritual, whereas in the passage from the *Commentary on De Anima* he uses both words. Rather, he says that the spiritual change is a change in which the “*intentio formae sensibilis*” comes to be in the sense organ. The word “intentional” is of course of the same root as *intentionale*, and as noted above, “*intentionale*” is traditionally associated with awareness or cognition. Certainly, in using the words “*spirituale*” and “*intentionale*” and “*intentional*,” Aquinas seeks to distinguish the change involved in perception from ordinary change as cognitive, and this is the point that I want to make here. However, it should be noted that these words have a rich history and are therefore, not easily defined, in particular, because their traditional association with cognition is complex.⁵²¹ Thus, I will discuss the nature of intentional existence and the *intentio* in more detail later.

What can we take from this passage? First, Aquinas is concerned here with two kinds of changes: natural and spiritual. A natural change occurs when the sensible form is received by the patient and comes to have natural existence in the patient. A spiritual change occurs when the sensible form is received by the patient and comes to have

⁵²¹ There are many interpretations of “intentional.” For example, see Hamlyn 1961, 46. Hamlyn translates *intentio* as an apprehension. Sorabji 1991, 243-244. Sorabji explains that *intentio* is usually understood as cognitive or as that which causes knowledge. But the problem with understanding *intentio* as cognitive is that Aquinas contends that an *intentio* can exist in the medium outside of the cognizer, so *intentio* cannot be understood as only a mental entity. As Sorabji points out later in the same article, that there were only mental entities that had no extramental existence is credited to Franz Brentano who characterized such entities as having intentional inexistence. (247)

spiritual existence in the patient. Second, in each of these changes Aquinas says that the form is received in the thing changed (*recipitur in immutato*). In the case of sensation, the patient, or thing changed, is the corporeal sense organ. Thus, the question arises, do both the natural change and the spiritual change involve a corporeal or material change? Since both natural and spiritual changes involve the reception of form in the thing changed, it appears that they are not to be understood in terms of a distinction between corporeal and incorporeal change. Third, Aquinas explicitly claims that all sensation requires spiritual change. The question arises whether sensation involves natural change as well, and Aquinas addresses this question here:

But in some senses we find spiritual immutation only, as in sight, while in others we find not only a spiritual but also a natural immutation, and this is either on the part of the object only, or likewise on the part of the organ. On the part of the object, we find local natural immutation in sound, which is the object of hearing; for sound is caused by percussion and commotion of the air. We find natural immutation by alteration in odor, which is the object of smelling; for in order to give off an odor, a body must be in a measure affected by heat. On the part of the organ, natural immutation takes place in touch and taste; for the hand that touches something hot becomes hot, while the tongue is moistened by the humidity of flavors. But the organs of smelling and hearing are not affected in their respective operations by any natural immutation, except accidentally.

Now, the sight, which is without natural immutation either in its organ or in its object, is the most spiritual, the most perfect, and the most universal of all the senses. After this comes the hearing and then the smell, which require a natural immutation on the part of the object; while local motion is more perfect than, and naturally prior to, the motion of alteration, as the Philosopher proves. Touch and taste are the most material of all (of their distinction we shall speak later on). Hence it is that the three other senses are not exercised through a medium united to them, to obviate any natural immutation in their organ; as happens as regards these two senses.⁵²²

⁵²² Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 78, a. 3: “Sed in quibusdam sensibus invenitur immutatio spiritualis tantum, sicut in visu. In quibusdam autem, cum immutatione spirituali, etiam naturalis; vel ex parte obiecti tantum, vel etiam ex parte organi. Ex parte autem obiecti, invenitur transmutatio naturalis, secundum locum quidem, in sono, qui est obiectum auditus, nam sonus ex percussione causatur et aeris commotione. Secundum alterationem vero, in odore, qui est obiectum olfactus, oportet enim per calidum alterari aliquo modo corpus, ad hoc quod spiret odorem. Ex parte autem organi, est immutatio naturalis in tactu et gustu, nam et manus tangens calida calefit, et lingua humectatur per humiditatem saporum. Organum vero olfactus aut auditus nulla naturali immutatione immutatur in sentiendo, nisi per accidens. Visus autem, quia est absque immutatione naturali et organi et obiecti, est maxime spiritualis, et perfectior inter omnes sensus, et

Sight, being the most spiritual and most perfect of all the senses, involves a spiritual change only. Hearing and smelling involve a natural change, but only on the part of the object, the sense organ is not naturally changed. Hearing and smelling are the only two of the senses that seem to require a natural change of the object. In order for an object to have an odor it must be changed by heat, and in order for there to be sound, there must be a percussion and commotion of air. The natural change here makes the object perceptible. Touch and taste, being the most material and being united to a medium, involve a natural change. But that the natural change occurs, the hand becomes hot, the tongue moistened, seems to be due to the fact that the sense organ is united to its medium. Whereas in hearing and smelling the natural immutation of the object makes something perceptible, the natural immutation of the organ in touch and taste seems to be coincidental. The natural immutation clearly is not involved in sensation *per se* because in sensation the sensible form is received not according to natural existence, but a spiritual or intentional existence. It is the spiritual change that is sensation.⁵²³ What then, does the natural immutation, as described above, accomplish?⁵²⁴ In a passage in the ST where Aquinas discusses the various powers of the soul, he writes:

communior. Et post hoc auditus, et deinde olfactus, qui habent immutationem naturalem ex parte obiecti. Motus tamen localis est perfectior et naturaliter prior quam motus alterationis, ut probatur in VIII *Physic*. Tactus autem et gustus sunt maxime materiales, de quorum distinctione post dicetur. Et inde est quod alii tres sensus non fiunt per medium coniunctum, ne aliqua naturalis transmutatio pertingat ad organum, ut accidit in his duobus sensibus.”

⁵²³ I want to be careful here in the language that I use. I do not want to say that the spiritual change constitutes sensation in the sense that some change in the sense organ gives rise to sensation. The spiritual change in the sense organ just is the sensation.

⁵²⁴ See Burnyeat 2001, 134. Burnyeat discusses this same passage and concludes that Aquinas holds that the sense organs undergo only a spiritual change in perception. The natural change that is involved in terms of the object and the medium is, Burnyeat contends, a “mere accompaniment” rather than any kind of material change that underlies perception. Burnyeat is in particularly responding to and rejecting Sorabji’s claim that there is a physiological change in the organ, i.e., the eye jelly becomes red when the eye sees red. See Sorabji 1991. I will discuss Burnyeat’s position in more detail later.

Below this, there is another operation of the soul, which is indeed performed through a corporeal organ, but not through a corporeal quality, and this is the operation of the sensitive soul. For though hot and cold, wet and dry, and other such corporeal qualities are required for the work of the senses, yet they are not required in such a way that the operation of the senses takes place by the power of such qualities; but only for the proper disposition of the organ.⁵²⁵

In this passage Aquinas discusses sensation as the act of a corporeal sense organ. He is careful to distinguish here between the operation of the sensitive soul which is performed through the sense organ, sensation, and the activities of corporeal qualities such as hot and cold, wet and dry. The corporeal qualities constitute the corporeal organ, but it is not by their power that sensation occurs. Rather the powers of the corporeal qualities ensure the “proper disposition of the sense organ.” Perhaps in terms of touch and taste where the hand is warmed and the tongue is moistened, the natural immutation occurs to ensure a proper disposition, although this remains. Be that as it may, I do think that the distinction between the activity of sensitive soul performed through the sense organ and the activity of the corporeal qualities is an important and helpful distinction in understanding Aquinas’ account of perception.

A natural change is one in which the sensible form is received by the patient such that it comes to have natural existence in the patient, that is, the matter of the patient comes to be similarly disposed to the matter of the agent. Only in touch and taste does such a natural change occur where the matter of the organ (at least the organ united to the medium) becomes like the matter of the agent. If we read this passage in line with the previous passage where Aquinas determines which senses need natural change and in

⁵²⁵ Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 78, a. 1: “Est autem alia operatio animae infra istam, quae quidem fit per organum corporale, non tamen per aliquam corpoream qualitatem. Et talis est operatio animae sensibilis, quia etsi calidum et frigidum, et humidum et siccum, et aliae huiusmodi qualitates corporeae requirantur ad operationem sensus; non tamen ita quod mediante virtute talium qualitatum operatio animae sensibilis procedat; sed requiruntur solum ad debitam dispositionem organi.” Trans. Pegis 1945, 322.

what way this natural change occurs, either of the object or of the organ, then it seems fair to say that, to the extent that a natural change is involved, its involvement in no way brings about or is required for sensation *per se*, but to ensure the necessary material conditions for sensation to occur.⁵²⁶

Three points can be taken from this discussion. First, while not all the senses involve a natural change, all sensation requires a spiritual change. Second, in the cases where there is a natural change, the natural change seems to have nothing to do with sensation *per se*. Third, if there is a change to the sense organ involved in sensation, it is not a natural change. Whether a change to the sense organ is the spiritual change or is something in addition to the spiritual change remains unclear. What needs to be understood then is the nature of spiritual change and whether it is a corporeal or incorporeal event.

For Aquinas the cognitive process includes both sensation and intellection. Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that both sensation and intellection are fundamentally passive, both are a kind of being affected. Both sensation and intellection require an object, sensation requires an external object whereas intellection requires an internal object. In both sensation and intellection a likeness of the object is received by the cognitive power. In sensation the sensible form is received according to intentional existence, and in intellection the intelligible form is received by the possible intellect.

⁵²⁶ See Burnyeat 2001, 145. Burnyeat contends sensation, for both Aristotle and Aquinas, requires no underlying material process. That said, he does contend that there are necessary material conditions that must be present for sensation to occur: “According to Aristotle, the eye must contain transparent liquid, the ear still air, and the organ of touch must be a mean of temperature and hardness. But these are static, standing conditions, not processes or events underlying the act of perception. Aquinas is as usual less detailed on physiological matters, but he clearly take the same line. Provided the sense organ has the proper disposition, it is ready for the spiritual change which is perception.” See also Burnyeat 1992.

That the sense and the intellect are capable of receiving a form of another thing, in addition to their own, is what makes them cognitive activities:

The cognizant are distinguished from the noncognizant in this respect, that the noncognizant have nothing but their own form alone, whereas a cognizing entity is suited to have the form of another thing as well. For the species of the thing being cognized is in the one cognizing.⁵²⁷

In order for there to be cognition at all, a form or species must come to exist in the one doing the cognizing. But as we have seen, the change that is required to effect such an existence of the form in the cognizer, is not a natural change, but a spiritual change in which the form exists in the cognizer according to a spiritual or intentional existence. Thus, something is cognizant if and only if it is able to have, in addition to its own form, intentionally existing forms of other things.⁵²⁸ How are we to understand intentional or spiritual existence, and are we to understand that they are immaterial? Aquinas uses the terms, ‘intentional,’ ‘spiritual,’ and ‘immaterial’ almost interchangeably.⁵²⁹ Aquinas agrees with Aristotle, however, that, whereas intellection does not require a bodily organ, sensation is an act of a corporeal organ such that the sense organ is a composite of the body and soul.⁵³⁰ Since sensation is the act of a corporeal organ, and Aquinas contends

⁵²⁷ Aquinas, *ST*, Q. 14, a. 1: “. . .cognoscentia a non cognoscentibus in hoc distinguuntur, quia non cognoscentia nihil habent nisi formam suam tantum; sed cognoscentia natum est habere formam etiam rei alterius, nam species cogniti est in cognoscente. . .” Trans. Pasnau 1997, 32.

⁵²⁸ Pasnau 1997, 34. I think that Pasnau is correct in this claim. In the *ST*, q. 78, Aquinas claims that all sensation requires a spiritual change.

⁵²⁹ Pasnau 1997, 38-39. Pasnau notes that it is hard, in fact, to find passages where Aquinas does not discuss one of these terms without another of them.

⁵³⁰ Aquinas, *ST*, I q. 77, a. 5: “Sed contra est quod philosophus dicit, in libro de somno et vigilia quod *sentire non est proprium animae neque corporis, sed coniuncti*. Potentia ergo sensitiva est in coniuncto sicut in subiecto. Non ergo sola anima est subiectum omnium potentialium suarum. Respondeo dicendum quod illud est subiectum operativae potentiae, quod est potens operari, omne enim accidens denominat proprium subiectum. Idem autem est quod potest operari, et quod operatur. Unde oportet quod eius sit potentia sicut subiecti, cuius est operatio; ut etiam philosophus dicit, in principio de somno et vigilia. Manifestum est autem ex supra dictis quod quaedam operationes sunt animae, quae exercentur sine organo corporali, ut intelligere et velle. Unde potentiae quae sunt harum operationum principia, sunt in anima sicut in subiecto. Quaedam vero operationes sunt animae, quae exercentur per organa corporalia; sicut visio per oculum, et auditus per aurem. Et simile est de omnibus aliis operationibus nutritivae et sensitivae partis. Et

that “nothing corporeal can make an impression on the incorporeal.,” how are we to understand a spiritual change in terms of sensation as the act of a corporeal sense organ?⁵³¹ This is a complicated question that has given rise to much and varied debate. I will discuss briefly here some of the arguments in the literature, not only to clarify how Aquinas understands the spiritual change in terms of sensation as the act of a corporeal sense organ, but even more to allow the complexities of the issues involved to emerge.

The received understanding Aquinas’ account of perception is given by Hamlyn:

[Aquinas] views sense perception primarily as a form of change in which the sense-organ is altered. But this cannot be all that is involved, for along with the physical change there goes the reception of a sensible form without matter. The latter Aquinas takes to be not something that happens to the sense-organ, but something that happens to the faculty of soul or mind. It is, in his words, a spiritual change.⁵³²

Hamlyn contends that “along with” the physical change to the sense organ, there is a spiritual change that happens to the soul or mind.⁵³³ This is in line with what Aquinas

ideo potentiae quae sunt talium operationum principia, sunt in coniuncto sicut in subiecto, et non in anima sola.”

⁵³¹ Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 84, a. 6: “Et quia incorporeum non potest immutari a corporeo. . .” Trans. Pegis 1945, 394.

⁵³² Hamlyn 1961, 46. Hamlyn’s interpretation of Aquinas’ account of perception is discussed and referenced in much of the recent literature concerning the nature of the spiritual change in Aquinas’ account of sensation. While I can here only consider some of the key arguments made in several of the articles, there are many more that weigh on this topic. See, for example, Mortimer J. Adler, “Sense Cognition: Aristotle vs. Aquinas,” in *New Scholasticism* 42(1968): 578-591; Burnyeat 1992; Burnyeat 2001, 130, Gerard Casey, “Immateriality and Intentionality,” in *At the Heart of the Real*, ed. Fran O’Rourke (Dublin, 1992); Sheldon M. Cohen, “St. Thomas Aquinas on the Immaterial Reception of Sensible Forms,” in *The Philosophical Review*, XCI, n. 2 (1982): 193-209; John Deely, “The Immateriality of the Intentional as Such,” in *New Scholasticism* 42 (1968): 293-306; John J. Haldane, Aquinas on Sense-Perception, in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (1983): 233-239; Paul Hoffman, “St. Thomas Aquinas on the Halfway State of Sensible Being,” in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XCIX, No. 1 (1990): 73-92; Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (New York, 1993); Nussbaum and Putnam 1992, Sorabji 1991; Martin M. Tweedale, “Origins of the Medieval Theory That Sensation is an Immaterial Reception of a Form,” in *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1992): 215-231;

⁵³³ Hamlyn here uses the word “physical” to describe a change other than the spiritual change. As seen above, Aquinas contrasts the natural change with the spiritual change. A natural change, it is true, is a material change, but it is more precisely, a change in which the form is received according to natural existence, where the matter is informed in the way the matter of the agent is informed, that is, the form exists in the patient in the same manner as it exists in the agent. As a material change, it is not inaccurate to describe it as a physical change, if one understands that the physical change is defined by the physics that is

says in It is not clear what the physical change is nor what its relationship to the spiritual change is, but Hamlyn contends that it is the spiritual change that produces the phantasm which he characterizes as a particular mental entity.⁵³⁴

Sheldon M. Cohen rejects Hamlyn's interpretation arguing that Aquinas regards the reception of form without matter, whether natural or spiritual, always as a physical event, and claims, moreover, that the phantasm is not a mental entity but a physical likeness.⁵³⁵ One of the points that Cohen makes is that sense organ must be viewed as a composite of body and soul. To be fair, Hamlyn recognizes this as well, but Cohen takes issue with Hamlyn's claim that the spiritual change is something that happens in the soul, making the soul the recipient of the phantasm. Cohen explains that while the intellective soul is a subsistent form, the sensitive soul is a substantial form which cannot exist outside of matter.⁵³⁶ The sensitive soul itself cannot therefore, be the recipient of anything, for it is always conjoined to the bodily organ. The composite of sensitive soul

embrace. Since Aquinas embraces Aristotle's physics, and Aristotle's physics includes both matter and form, then the natural change is a physical change, and change in which matter is informed. Thus, without keeping the physics in mind, it can be misleading to cast the distinction between spiritual change and natural change as one between the physical and nonphysical or mental. This point is of course at issue in the debate in the literature. Often the word 'physical' is used to refer to the corporeal and as I pointed out above, the distinction between the spiritual change and the natural change is not necessarily a distinction between the incorporeal and the corporeal. Corporeal means bodily and in terms of Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between the soul and the body, 'body' always refers to the living body. Thus, corporeal does not simply mean material, as it is already a composite of form and matter, it refers to a body that is organic and has life. The word "physical" is problematic when discussing any theory of sensation based on Aristotle's physics and metaphysics and therefore, some clarification is in order. Hamlyn is not alone in the use of this word, others use it as well, including Pasnau, whose use of this term I will discuss later. The word "physical" and "physics" share the same root. See Burnyeat 1992 and Burnyeat 2001. Burnyeat stresses the difference between Aristotle's physics and ours and contends that Aristotle's physics is "deeply alien" to us and therefore should be "junked." While I do not agree with Burnyeat on this point, I do appreciate his contention that we need to be careful in our use of the word "physical" when working in the Aristotelian framework.

⁵³⁴ Hamlyn 1961, 48.

⁵³⁵ Cohen, 1982, 193.

⁵³⁶ Cohen 1982, 203.

and the particular bodily organ receives the form and thus, for Aquinas, “sensation is not a *per se* act of the soul, but an act of the composite.”⁵³⁷

Paul Hoffman sees Cohen’s point to be that Aquinas understands that “the immaterial reception of sensible forms is always a physical event,” but criticizes Cohen for not taking into consideration Aquinas’ claim that corporeality and materiality come in degrees.⁵³⁸ Hoffman points out that since senses are the powers of corporeal organs, whatever is received by them must be received corporeally and materially, and therefore with individuating conditions.⁵³⁹ Hoffman here cites a passage from Aquinas’ *Commentary on De Anima* in which Aquinas contends that since “everything is received in mode of the recipient,” (*unumquodque autem recipitur in aliquo per modum sui*) the sense necessarily receives the sensible form materially and corporeally.⁵⁴⁰ Hoffman explains that Aquinas must say that the sense receives the sensible form immaterially and materially:

In order for sensible forms to play their essential epistemological role of securing cognition of particulars, he is led to say that they are received corporeally and materially. Yet he also asserts that they are received immaterially, as it seems he

⁵³⁷ Cohen 1982, 205. See also Tweedale 1992, 216. Tweedale thinks that Cohen’s argument that the sensible form is received by the organ and not the sensitive soul is correct.

⁵³⁸ Hoffman 1990, 73, 79.

⁵³⁹ Hoffman 1990, 83.

⁵⁴⁰ Hoffman 1990, 84. See also Aquina, *Sentencia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 12, n. 5: “Circa ea vero quae hic dicuntur, considerandum est, quare sensus sit singularium, scientia vero universalium; et quomodo universalia sint in anima. Sciendum est igitur circa primum, quod sensus est virtus in organo corporali; intellectus vero est virtus immaterialis, quae non est actus alicuius organi corporalis. Unumquodque autem recipitur in aliquo per modum sui. Cognitio autem omnis fit per hoc, quod cognitum est aliquo modo in cognoscente, scilicet secundum similitudinem. Nam cognoscens in actu, est ipsum cognitum in actu. Oportet igitur quod sensus corporaliter et materialiter recipiat similitudinem rei quae sentitur. Intellectus autem recipit similitudinem eius quod intelligitur, incorporaliter et immaterialiter. Individuatio autem naturae communis in rebus corporalibus et materialibus, est ex materia corporali, sub determinatis dimensionibus contenta: universale autem est per abstractionem ab huiusmodi materia, et materialibus conditionibus individuantibus. Manifestum est igitur, quod similitudo rei recepta in sensu repraesentat rem secundum quod est singularis; recepta autem in intellectu, repraesentat rem secundum rationem universalis naturae: et inde est, quod sensus cognoscit singularia, intellectus vero universalia, et horum sunt scientiae.

must if he is to maintain a distinction between the cognitive and non-cognitive reception of forms.⁵⁴¹

In order to reconcile these apparently opposing claims that forms are received immaterially and materially, Hoffman contends that Aquinas posits a “halfway state of sensible being” that shows that Aquinas thinks that immateriality and materiality admit of degrees.⁵⁴² Hoffman infers that the activity of the senses is neither wholly corporeal nor wholly incorporeal. Thus, whereas Cohen understands the spiritual reception of sensible forms as a “wholly physical process,” Hoffman contends that it is corporeal to the extent that the forms are received materially (under individuating conditions) and incorporeal to the extent that the sensible forms are received immaterially.⁵⁴³ While the immaterial reception of the sensible form is a corporeal event, Hoffman is careful to distinguish it from a corporeal change. In other words, the spiritual change is an incorporeal change that takes place in a corporeal organ.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴¹ Hoffman 1990, 84.

⁵⁴² Hoffman 1990, 85. See also Aquinas, *Sententia De anima*, lib. 2, l. 5 n. 4-6: “Huiusmodi autem viventia inferiora, quorum actus est anima, de qua nunc agitur, habent duplex esse. Unum quidem materiale, in quo conveniunt cum aliis rebus materialibus. Aliud autem immateriale, in quo communicant cum substantiis superioribus aequaliter. Est autem differentia inter utrumque esse: quia secundum esse materiale, quod est per materiam contractum, unaquaeque res est hoc solum quod est, sicut hic lapis, non est aliud quam hic lapis: secundum vero esse immateriale, quod est amplum, et quodammodo infinitum, in quantum non est per materiam terminatum, res non solum est id quod est, sed etiam est quodammodo alia. Unde in substantiis superioribus immaterialibus sunt quodammodo omnia, sicut in universalibus causis. Huiusmodi autem immateriale esse, habet duos gradus in istis inferioribus. Nam quoddam est penitus immateriale, scilicet esse intelligibile. In intellectu enim res habent esse, et sine materia, et sine conditionibus materialibus individuandis, et etiam absque organo corporali. Esse autem sensibile est medium inter utrumque. Nam in sensu res habet esse sine materia, non tamen absque conditionibus materialibus individuandis, neque absque organo corporali. Est enim sensus particularium, intellectus vero universalium.”

⁵⁴³ Hoffman 1990, 86.

⁵⁴⁴ Hoffman 1990, 86. Hoffman further contends that Aquinas distinguishes between the corporeality of activities and the corporeality of change. The corporeality of activities admits of degrees, while the corporeality of change does not. If by “event” Cohen means change, then Hoffman contends that Cohen’s claim that the spiritual reception of sensible form is a physical event is false.

Burnyeat largely agrees with Cohen that the reception of form without matter in sensation is a “peculiar kind of physical event.”⁵⁴⁵ Burnyeat contends that Aquinas understands a spiritual change as a kind of bodily change.⁵⁴⁶ He argues that Aquinas follows Aristotle in understanding that the reception of the form without matter is simply perceptual awareness and requires no underlying material process.⁵⁴⁷ While there are necessary bodily conditions for perception to occur, it is not the case that these material conditions in any way either give rise to or account for perception, nor is it the case that these necessary conditions are material changes in the sense organ.⁵⁴⁸ As discussed above, Burnyeat emphasizes that Aquinas claims that the corporeal qualities are only necessary for the proper disposition of the organ. As Aquinas maintains that the activity of sense is primarily passive, the sense organ must be properly disposed to receive the sensible species. The spiritual reception of the species is clearly a corporeal event for Burnyeat, but not a material change to the sense organ. Still, Burnyeat contends that the presence of the sensible form in the sense organ is a physical fact.⁵⁴⁹

I would like now to enter into an extended discussion of Pasnau’s reading of Aquinas’ account of sensation because I feel it is a useful means of illustrating the complexity of the issues involved. As will become clear in my discussion, I feel that Pasnau seriously misstates Aquinas’ position through the introduction of extraneous modern terms that have no place in Aquinas’, and for that matter, Aristotle’s system. The goal of this discussion is to come to a clearer understanding of the key issues and

⁵⁴⁵ Burnyeat 2003, 130.

⁵⁴⁶ Burnyeat 2003, 146.

⁵⁴⁷ Burnyeat 2003, 143-146.

⁵⁴⁸ Burnyeat 2003, 143

⁵⁴⁹ Burnyeat 2003, 149.

elements of Aquinas' account of sensation and to highlight any difficulties that Scotus will need to address.

Pasnau offers, on his own account, a controversial reading of Aquinas, controversial, he says, due to uncertainty about the meaning of the terms "physical" and "material."⁵⁵⁰ He contends that while there is a natural presumption that favors a literal reading of Aquinas that "sensation involves not natural but spiritual alteration," there is textual evidence to override this presumption.⁵⁵¹ It is hard to know exactly what Pasnau means here because he accepts the difference between a natural change and a spiritual change, according to Aquinas, as a difference in the manner in which a form is received by the patient.⁵⁵² In fact, he begins his argument with the observation that, for Aquinas, cognition requires that the form of the cognized object be in the cognizer, not according

⁵⁵⁰ Pasnau 1997, 35. In his effort to clarify what he means when he uses the term "physical" Pasnau appeals to a contemporary understanding that even he admits is confused. The real problem of Pasnau's reading, as I see it, is not due to any contemporary confusion, for even if there were none, the use of modern terminology would still fail to appreciate the medieval use of Aristotle's physics. Moreover, Pasnau's own use of "physical" is not always clear. I will give two examples. First, he contends that, according to Aquinas, the human being is not wholly physical due to the rational soul.(36) But on the very same page he says that, while he is inclined to believe that nonhuman animals are wholly physical, for Aquinas, he is not arguing this point, nor will he take a position on it. But if what makes the human being not wholly physical is the rational soul, and nonhuman animals do not have the rational soul, then why is it not immediately clear that nonhuman animals are wholly physical? Second, Pasnau contends that Aquinas says that sense organs are "entirely physical" (45) and that the sense powers are entirely physical powers because they use corporeal organs (36, 43). But then he notes that it is the nonphysicality of the intellect that makes us qualitatively different cognizers than other beings that can cognize, that is, on Pasnau's account, receive forms according to intentional existence.(55) The degree of immateriality, for Aquinas, determines the degree of cognitive ability and "immateriality" is identified with "intentional," meaning the ability to receive a form without taking on the characteristics of that form. (56) But Pasnau uses the word nonphysicality interchangeably with immateriality. Earlier Pasnau explained that he uses the word "physical" to refer to objects that are wholly material (in the modern sense), that is objects that lack spirituality. If the word physical means material, and the sense organ is wholly physical, then how could it ever be cognitive if it is only cognitive to the degree that it is immaterial, that is, nonphysical? At times Pasnau wants to identify immaterial with intentional where intentional is not incompatible with physicality. But at other times he identifies immaterial as nonphysical and argues that something is cognitive to the degree that it is nonphysical. He criticizes Hoffman however for making sensation partly nonphysical. (45) Pasnau claims that sensation is a wholly physical process while allowing that nonphysicality is what determines cognition.

⁵⁵¹ Pasnau 1997, 42-43.

⁵⁵² Pasnau 1997, 33.

to natural existence, but according to intentional existence.⁵⁵³ As we have seen, Aquinas understands spiritual change as the reception of the sensible form according to intentional existence, and on Pasnau's own account, it is just such a reception that distinguishes the cognizant from the noncognizant.⁵⁵⁴ What Pasnau argues is that sensation does involve a spiritual change, but spirituality, and for that matter, immateriality, "are not what they seem to be."⁵⁵⁵ Sensation, for Aquinas, according to Pasnau, is a "wholly physical event."⁵⁵⁶ A spiritual change, though different from a natural change, is nonetheless a physical change.

Pasnau contends that Aquinas defines intentional existence only in negative terms: "All we are told is what it is not: it is not natural existence," and if we want to know further what intentional existence is, "Aquinas remains silent."⁵⁵⁷ Forms received according to intentional existence come to exist in the patient without the patient becoming the sort of thing that the agent is, that is, "the form of p exists in the recipient without the recipient's taking on p."⁵⁵⁸ And because the sensible form is received in the physical sense organ according to intentional existence, this reception is a "physical" event: "for a body, such as a physical organ, to receive a form is simply for that body to be altered from one physical state to another."⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵³ Pasnau 1997, 32.

⁵⁵⁴ Pasnau 1997, 32.

⁵⁵⁵ Pasnau 1997, 37.

⁵⁵⁶ Pasnau 1997, 35-37.

⁵⁵⁷ Pasnau 1997 41. See also Burnyeat 2001, 142. Burnyeat makes the same point in terms of the negative definition of intentional existence. Burnyeat observes that both Aristotle and Aquinas explain the change involved in sensation in terms of what is not. Sensation is not an ordinary alteration. Aristotle says that the form is received *without* the matter. Aquinas says that the form is received according to intentional existence. The use of the terms "intentional" or "spiritual" do little more than remind us that perception involves a different kind of change, that what is being discussed is "perceptual *cognition*." Still, Burnyeat contends that the terms "intentional" and "spiritual" are good labels.

⁵⁵⁸ Pasnau 1997 41.

⁵⁵⁹ Pasnau 1997, 45.

At the heart of Pasnau's argument that sensation is a wholly physical event is his contention that "Aquinas sees no incompatibility between intentionality and physicality."⁵⁶⁰ Pasnau contends that Aquinas almost always uses the terms "intentional," "spiritual," and "immaterial" interchangeably.⁵⁶¹ However, he also observes that Aquinas "associates the mental with the nonphysical."⁵⁶² Aquinas understands the intellect as immaterial, thus, if Aquinas uses the terms "intentional," and "spiritual," and "immaterial" interchangeably, intentionality and spirituality would be associated with the mental (intellectual) as well. But Pasnau contends that Aquinas does not restrict intentionality to the mental.⁵⁶³ Since intentionality is not restricted to the mental, Pasnau concludes that intentionality and thereby cognition, "can occur in wholly corporeal or physical entities."⁵⁶⁴ Pasnau understands a "wholly physical" entity as an entity that is wholly material, lacking in anything spiritual, and moreover, claims that the sense organ is a "wholly physical entity."⁵⁶⁵ Thus, on Pasnau's reading that sensation is a wholly physical event, the spiritual or intentional existence of the sensible form in the sense organ is not "some kind of ghostly, incorporeal state of existence."⁵⁶⁶

One of the problems that arises from the claim that something is cognitive insofar as it is suitable to receive a form intentionally, concerns the fact of the medium that exists between the external sense object and the sense organ. In embracing an Aristotelian account of sensation, Aquinas holds that the likenesses or species of an external object are transmitted to the sense organ through the medium, for example, the species of a

⁵⁶⁰ Pasnau 1997

⁵⁶¹ Pasnau 1997, 38-39.

⁵⁶² Pasnau 1997, 35.

⁵⁶³ Pasnau 1997, 35.

⁵⁶⁴ Pasnau 1997, 35.

⁵⁶⁵ Pasnau 1997, 45.

⁵⁶⁶ Pasnau 1996, 42.

color is transmitted through the air to the pupil. The species of the color exists in the air according to intentional existence.⁵⁶⁷ Thus, the “*species in medio*” is an *intentio*. Does this make air cognitive?

Aquinas’ contends that what distinguishes the cognitive from the noncognitive is the suitability to receive forms intentionally. Pasnau claims that what Aquinas means is “something is cognitive iff it is suited to have not just its own form but also the intentionally existing forms of other things.”⁵⁶⁸ It seems clear that Aquinas contends that what is cognitive must be able to receive forms intentionally. But it is not clear that if something is able to receive forms intentionally, it is thereby cognitive. Air is able to receive forms intentionally. Somehow the species of color is in the air without coloring the air. Pasnau clearly states that air is not cognitive.⁵⁶⁹ But because he wants to insist that cognition is simply a matter of being able to receive forms intentionally, he is in a predicament, for which he finds a way out in the claim that, according to Aquinas, “being cognitive is a matter of being (literally) informed.”⁵⁷⁰ Pasnau reads Aquinas as identifying being “informed” with “taking in or receiving.”⁵⁷¹ Thus, he says: “air and

⁵⁶⁷ Pasnau 1997, 48. Pasnau quotes from Aquinas, *Questiones disputatae de veritate* (*QDV*) (Leonine v. 22): “Unde species coloris est in aere per modum intentionis. . .”

⁵⁶⁸ Pasnau 1997, 34.

⁵⁶⁹ Pasnau 1997, 50.

⁵⁷⁰ Pasnau 1997, 50. Of course here being informed means receiving the form such that the form comes to be present in the cognizer without characterizes the matter of the cognizer in any way. To say that cognition is a matter of being “informed” for Aquinas, is a bit misleading, because Aquinas goes to great lengths to show how sensation involves a different kind of change than a natural change. Moreover, Pasnau does not seem to consider the nature of the sensible form that is received. He does say repeatedly that the species are forms (36, 45), and that they inform the physical organ (45). But he does not explain just what that informing of the physical organ means or entails, nor what is the effect of such a process of informing. He also says that forms can be thought of as material or physical, “if it is the form of something that is wholly physical.” (36) Again, I am not sure here how to understand this claim. It is true that some forms can inform matter, and some forms, for example, angels, do not. But even the form that informs matter, is not itself material. Using this terminology, that the form is informing the physical organ, comes very close to identifying the spiritual change as a natural change, but Aquinas clearly contrasts these two changes.

⁵⁷¹ Pasnau 1997, 51.

other media exhibit the same capacity as the sense organs, intellect and even God: all contain intentionally existing forms.” In fact, he claims that each “receives information” from the external world.

Aquinas understands immateriality and materiality as being of degrees, the more immaterial the recipient, the more cognitive the recipient. In *ST*, I, q. 84, a. 2, Aquinas explains that in order to know material things, these material things must exist immaterially in the knower.⁵⁷² The intellect does not have immediate access to external sensible objects so in order to know them an immaterial likeness must be in the knower. Aquinas contends that since knowledge is in inverse ratio to materiality, only that which is able to receive forms immaterially can come to have knowledge.⁵⁷³ Thus, he explains both sensation and intellection in terms of the immaterial reception of forms:

Consequently, things that are not receptive of forms, save materially, have no power of knowledge whatever—such as plants, as the Philosopher says. But the more immaterially a being receives the form of the thing known, the more perfect its knowledge. Therefore the intellect, which abstracts the species not only from matter, knows more perfectly than the senses, which receive the form of the thing known, without matter indeed, but subject to material conditions. Moreover, among the senses themselves, sight has the most perfect knowledge, because it is the least material, as we have remarked above. So too, among intellects, the more perfect is the more immaterial.⁵⁷⁴

Aquinas understands immateriality and materiality, and thereby, cognition, in terms of degrees, there is a hierarchy of immateriality, of cognition. Since air can receive a form

⁵⁷² Aquinas *ST*, I, q. 84, a. 2: “Relinquitur ergo quod oportet materialia cognita in cognoscente existere non materialiter, sed magis immaterialiter.”

⁵⁷³ Aquinas *ST*, I, q. 84, a. 2: “Unde manifestum est quod ratio cognitionis ex opposito se habet ad rationem materialitatis.”

⁵⁷⁴ Aquinas, *ST*, I, q. 84, a. 2: “Et ideo quae non recipiunt formas nisi materialiter, nullo modo sunt cognoscitiva, sicut plantae; ut dicitur in II libro de anima. Quanto autem aliquid immaterialius habet formam rei cognitae, tanto perfectius cognoscit. Unde et intellectus, qui abstrahit speciem non solum a materia, sed etiam a materialibus conditionibus individuantibus, perfectius cognoscit quam sensus, qui accipit formam rei cognitae sine materia quidem, sed cum materialibus conditionibus. Et inter ipsos sensus, visus est magis cognoscitivus, quia est minus materialis, ut supra dictum est. Et inter ipsos intellectus, tanto quilibet est perfectior, quanto immaterialior.”

according to intentional existence, whereas a plant cannot, it seems as if it is in some sense cognitive, though less so than the sense organs which are less cognitive than the intellect. Pasnau argues that the real difference that separates one cognizer from another is not the manner in which the form is received, but rather “the kinds of forms that a thing receives and, in particular, the degree of their universality.”⁵⁷⁵ Air can only receive forms that are entirely particular and unstructured. Human beings, in contrast, are able to have truly universal intellectual representations. But the kind of forms that can be received is determined by the suitability of the receiver, and this is finally what shows that air is not cognitive according to Pasnau. Whereas human beings are suited to have universal concepts, air is so poorly suited to receive intentionally existing forms that it is not cognitive. Air is simply not suited to receive species in the way that senses or the intellect can.⁵⁷⁶ Pasnau then wonders why Aquinas invokes the notion of intentional existence at all, given the problems that arise on his reading, and contends that the truly critical and determining feature of the cognitive is that “they are suited to contain a great deal of information about their environment.”⁵⁷⁷

What can we take from this lengthy discussion of Pasnau’s reading of Aquinas? There are several issues to consider. First, Pasnau’s use of modern terminology often confuses the issues and misconstrues the problems. Aquinas is working in an Aristotelian framework and thus embraces the Aristotelian physics, where there is nothing that is wholly material. The fundamental components of Aristotle’s physics are form and matter. Moreover, Aquinas embraces Aristotle’s hylomorphic understanding of the body and soul relationship. Thus, the sense organ is not “wholly physical” but is a composite

⁵⁷⁵ Pasnau 1997, 52.

⁵⁷⁶ Pasnau 1997, 54.

⁵⁷⁷ Pasnau 1997, 55.

of soul and body. The fact that the sense organ is able to do what it does is precisely because it is ensouled, alive.

Second, in order to show that sensation is a “wholly physical event,” Pasnau claims there is no incompatibility between spiritual or intentional and physicality. He then argues that cognition is defined as the suitability of receiving forms according to intentional existence, and this is a suitability that something entirely physical, for example, a sense organ has. But since even air receives forms intentionally, but air is not cognitive, Pasnau must look for another way to define cognition, and he finds this in the hierarchy of immateriality and cognition, where the kinds of forms that are received and the suitability of the recipient become the distinguishing features of the cognitive. But even these features only differ by degrees such that Pasnau claims that Aquinas’ account implies that media theoretically participate in the same sorts of operations as do the “properly cognitive” faculties of sense and intellect.⁵⁷⁸ I would argue that Aquinas’ account, only on Pasnau’s reading, implies such a thing. The sense organ is a highly structured organ that is connected to the living body and therefore has the ability to operate as an animate being unlike the air which is inanimate.

Third, the claim that, for Aquinas, something is cognitive iff it is suitable to receive forms intentionally is fallacious, even with the modifications that Pasnau makes. Pasnau himself points out that Aquinas agrees with the Augustinian contention that “attention is required for the act of any cognitive power.”⁵⁷⁹ In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas claims, “the cognitive power doesn’t actually cognize anything unless

⁵⁷⁸ Pasnau 1997, 50.

⁵⁷⁹ Pasnau 1997, 134. Pasnau quotes from *QDV* 13.3c: “. . . cuius ratio est quia ad actum alicuius cognoscitivae potentiae requiritur intentio, ut probat Augustinus in libro *De Trinitate*.” Trans. Pasnau.

an attention (*intentio*) is present.”⁵⁸⁰ The meaning of *intentio*, for Aquinas, Pasnau argues, implies “a certain order of one thing to another.”⁵⁸¹ Pasnau argues thus, *intentio* means the same thing as *conversio*, a turning toward the object.⁵⁸² Not only does Aquinas claim that the intellect must turn towards (*conversio*) the phantasm in order to cognize but he also claims that:

A power can cognize something only by turning itself to its object—as sight cognizes something only by turning itself to a color.⁵⁸³

That a power can only cognize something by tending towards it (*convertendo*) seems to be necessary condition for cognition according to Aquinas. Thus, even if something is cognitive if it is suited to receive an intentional form, the suitability to receive an intentional form does not make something cognitive. What does make something cognitive, in addition to receiving an intentional form, is the ability to tend towards the object. It seems then, that Aquinas holds that any definition of cognition must include the ability to attend to the object, and this is something that air clearly cannot do, and therefore, air is not cognitive precisely because it cannot participate in the same operations that the sense and the intellect do, theoretically or not. Given that Aquinas associates *intentio* with *conversio*, it also seems clear why he would invoke intentional existence in terms of the reception of the form in sensation. Aquinas clearly claims that sensation requires a spiritual change. It is true that he does not fully explain exactly how the spiritual change occurs. And this gives rise to the debate about whether it is a

⁵⁸⁰ Pasnau 1997, 135. Pasnau quotes from *SCG* I.55.458: “Vis cognoscitiva non cognoscit aliquid actu nisi adsit intentio: unde et phatansmata in organo conservata interdum non actu imaginamur, quia *intentio* non fertur ad ea. . .” Trans. Pasnau.

⁵⁸¹ Pasnau 1997, 135. Pasnau quotes from *II Sent.* 38.1.3c: “Intentio in ratione sua ordinem quemdam unius ad alterum importat. . .” Trans. Pasnau.

⁵⁸² This is an important point that I will return to in my discussion of Scotus’s account of sensation.

⁵⁸³ Pasnau 1997, 136. Pasnau quotes from *QDV* 10.2 ad 7: “Nulla potentia potest aliquid cognoscere nisi convertendo se ad obiectum suum, sicut visus nihil cognoscit nisi convertendo ad colorem; . . .” Trans. Pasnau.

corporeal or incorporeal change. That the sense organ is an ensouled entity connected to the living being determines its capacity to sense or perceive. It seems that the reception of the sensible form according to intentional existence by the sense organ must involve cognitive attention.

While it is clear that though Aquinas has some notion of cognitive attention, Pasnau still observes that a real tension exists for Aquinas between the passivity of sensation and an activity of cognitive attention.⁵⁸⁴ According to Pasnau, while Aquinas does not give an account of what cognitive attention is, he does explicitly and often maintain that the senses are primarily passive.⁵⁸⁵ For example, Aquinas claims that, “things outside the soul are related to the exterior senses as a sufficient agent with which the patients do not co-operate but only receive.”⁵⁸⁶ In yet another passage Aquinas writes that, “for a sense’s complete operation the impression of its active [object] in the manner of passion alone suffices.”⁵⁸⁷ Based on his reading of Aquinas, Pasnau does not find resolution of this tension in Aquinas.⁵⁸⁸

The points to be taken from this discussion on Aquinas are as follows: 1) Aquinas embraces Aristotle’s account of sensation and interprets Aristotle’s claim that the form is received with matter by his distinction between the natural change and the spiritual change. Sensation requires the spiritual change, the reception of the form according to intentional existence in the sense organ, 2) It is not clear exactly how this spiritual change happens nor whether it is a corporeal event itself or an incorporeal event

⁵⁸⁴ Pasnau 1997, 60, 146.

⁵⁸⁵ Pasnau 1997, 146.

⁵⁸⁶ Pasnau 1997, 136. Pasnau quotes from Aquinas, *Quodlibet* 8.2.1: “Ad sensus enim exteriores se habent sicut agentia sufficientia, quibus patientia non cooperantur, sed recipiunt tantum.” Trans. Pasnau.

⁵⁸⁷ Pasnau 1997, 136. Pasnau quotes from Aquinas, III *Sent.* 14.1.1.2c: “Sed quia sensus non sentit nisi ad praesentiam sensibilis, ideo ad eius operationem perfectam sufficit impressio sui activi per modum passionis tantum. . .” Trans. Pasnau.

⁵⁸⁸ Pasnau 1997, 142.

in a corporeal organ, 3) It is not clear how the sensible form exists intentionally in the sense organ, that is, in ordinary change, the patient is informed, that is, receives the form in the manner in which the form is in the agent. Such a change is in line with Aristotle's framework. But how can the presence of a form that does not inform its patient in this ordinary way, be explained? 4) Aquinas maintains that the senses are primarily passive, and thus, a problem arises in accounting for cognitive attention.

4.2 John Duns Scotus' Account of Sensation

Along with Aristotle, Scotus contends that all our knowledge arises from sense perception.⁵⁸⁹ Even more importantly however, is Scotus' understanding, in line with Aristotle, that the sense requires the presence of an external sensible object whereas the intellect requires the presence of an internal intelligible object. The intellect does not have direct access to the external object in this life and therefore, depends upon sensation to provide an object by way phantasm. Such a dependency requires an intimate cooperation between the sense faculty and the intellective faculty. Thus, it is important to understand Scotus' account of sensation as it is the origin of knowledge. It is noted in several places in the literature that Scotus does not spend much time delineating his account of sensation. Tachau points out that the process of sensation and the multiplication of species theory seemed "well-established and largely uncontroversial" to Scotus.⁵⁹⁰ In his chapter on Scotus' account of cognition in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, Pasnau makes the same point explaining that a substantial consensus on

⁵⁸⁹ *QMA*, b. 2, q. 1, p. 4[2]: "Dicendum quod non habet aliquam cognitionem naturalem secundum naturam suam, neque simplicium neque complexorum, quia 'omnis nostra cognitio ortum habet a sensu'." Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 170.

⁵⁹⁰ Tachau 1988, 58.

the basic elements of cognition existed by the end of the 13th century, and Scotus mostly endorses this view.⁵⁹¹ Scotus' treatment of sensation varies throughout his texts, for example, he discusses it in more detail in his questions on Aristotle's *De Anima (QDA)*, as is to be expected, but rarely mentions it in his *Quodlibetal Questions*. Moreover, his treatment of sensation in the *Quodlibetal Questions* differs from his treatment of sensation in the *QDA*.

Scotus basically embraces Aristotle's, and thereby, Aquinas', account of cognition, including the distinction between sensation and intellection, that sensation is an organic process whereas intellection is an inorganic process, that there are five external senses as well as the internal senses of the brain, and the understanding that what is material cannot act on what is immaterial, thus, the senses cannot directly act on the intellect.⁵⁹² My understanding of Scotus is that he is thoroughly Aristotelian in his view of the cognitive processes such that, while there are elements in his own account of cognition that find their source in Augustinianism or his own theological beliefs, it is my contention that these influences serve to enhance and deepen his understanding of Aristotelian metaphysics which in turn provides the cohesiveness of his own thought.⁵⁹³

In my discussion of Scotus' understanding of sensation I am interested to see if there are elements in his account that can address the questions that emerged from the discussion of Aquinas' account of sensation. The organization of this section follows these questions: 4.2.1) Does Scotus accept the distinction between natural change and

⁵⁹¹ Pasnau 2003, 286. See also, Peter King, "Duns Scotus on Mental Content," in *Duns Scotus à Paris, 1302-2002* (Brepols 2004), 5. King explains that, while at the turn of the 14th century a crisis emerged in the understanding of the traditional Aristotelian account of intellection, the traditional account of sensory cognition was still widely accepted.

⁵⁹² Pasnau 2003, 286.

⁵⁹³ In this chapter I will discuss examples of Augustine's influence. In chapter 3 I give a detailed discussion of the beatific vision and the incarnation.

spiritual change where the spiritual change demarcates sensation? 4.2.2) Is the change that is involved in sensation a corporeal change or an incorporeal change? 4.2.3) Can Scotus account for the presence of the sensible form in the sense organ, and how does he understand the nature of this form, that is, what is its ontological status? 4.2.4) Does Scotus maintain, as Aquinas does, that the senses are primarily passive or does he offer a different account in which he accords an activity to the senses such that he is in a better position to account for the activity of attending to the object? I will address each question in order beginning with the first.

4.2.1 Scotus' Account of Natural Change and Spiritual Change

In his *Quaestiones Super Secundum et Tertium De Anima (QDA)*, Scotus discusses Aquinas' distinction between natural change and spiritual change in regards to sensation in Questions 4 and 6.⁵⁹⁴ In both questions he claims that in a natural change the form is received by the patient according to real being (*esse reale*) and according to the

⁵⁹⁴ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 4, p. 11: "Circa quod sciendum est quod duplex est immutatio ipsius sensibilis. Una est naturalis, quando scilicet immutatur sensus a sensibili secundum idem vel tale esse, vel secundum eundem modum essendi, quo est in re extra ut cum sensus tactus calefit vel alius sensus aliquo modo alteretur vel movetur secundum locum. Alia est immutatio animalis secundum quam immutatur intentionaliter vel spiritualiter a sensibili, licet habeat modum essendi extra realem sive materialem. Modo ita est quod aliquis sensus immutatur spiritualiter tantum, ut visus." See also Scotus, *QDA*, q. 6, p. 7: "Est autem duplex immutatio in genere: quaedam naturalis, quaedam animalis. Naturalis est secundum quam vel per quam forma recipitur in patiente secundum esse reale, et secundum dispositionem materiae, consimilem illi quae est in agente. Animalis autem secundum quam recipitur secundum esse intentionale species obiecti agentis in potentiam animale." All Latin text is taken from B. Ioannis Duns Scoti, *Quaestiones Super Secundum et Tertium De Anima*, ed. C. Bazan, K. Emery, R. Green, T. Noone, R. Plevano, A. Traver (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006). It is should be noted here that the authenticity of the *QDA*, though long debated, has recently been accepted. On pages 121*-148* of the introduction, the authenticity of the *QDA*, as well as the debate concerning it, is discussed and evidence presented. For example, Leen Spruit sees that the *QDA* "faithfully represents" Scotus' thought and Katherine Tachau discovered that Adam Wodeham cites Scotus and the *QDA* explicitly.(123) See also, Leen Spruit, '*Species intelligibilis*': *From Perception to Knowledge*, 2 vols. (Leiden-NewYork, 1994), in vol. 1, 259 n. 6; Katherine Tachau, "The Problem of the *Species in medio* at Oxford in the Generation after Ockham," *Mediaeval Studies* 44 (1982): 393-443, at 430-31 n. 127. All translations of passages from the *QDA* discussed in this chapter are mine.

disposition of matter as in the agent, the example being, warming. A spiritual change is one in which the form is received according to intentional being, and the example that he uses is vision. He agrees with Aquinas that vision only involves the reception of the form according to intentional existence, and therefore is the most noble of all the senses.⁵⁹⁵ He also recognizes that the other senses involve natural changes in respect to the object or the organ in the same way as Aquinas.⁵⁹⁶

In Question 5, Scotus considers whether the sense is receptive of the species without matter. In his response he basically follows Aquinas' account in terms of the natural change, which he clearly sees as change involving matter. Scotus claims that in some cases the patient receives the form according to the same mode of being that the form has in the agent.⁵⁹⁷ This is a natural change (*actione naturali*) in which the "agent and the patient communicate in matter."⁵⁹⁸

In Question 5, Scotus does not call the change that is involved in sensation a spiritual change here nor does he explain it in terms of intentional change (he does in Question 6), though in addressing the principal arguments, he refers to the an intentional change in terms of touch.⁵⁹⁹ Scotus explains that in some other cases, the patient is not disposed materially in the same way as the agent, and then it receives without matter,

⁵⁹⁵ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 6, p. 11: ". . .quia visus, cum immutatur tantum intentionaliter, est sensus noblior. . ."

⁵⁹⁶ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 6, p. 11: ". . .si secundo modo, aut est transmutatio naturalis ex parte obiecti, aut ex parte organi. . ."

⁵⁹⁷ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 6: "Respondeo: aliquando patiens recipit formam secundum eundem modum essendi quo est in agente. . ."

⁵⁹⁸ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 6: ". . .et illud accidit in actione naturali, in qua agens et patiens communicant in materia." (my translation)

⁵⁹⁹ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 15: "Ad aliud dicendum quod tactus in quantum sensus non recipit calorem materialiter vel realiter, sed immutatur intentionaliter tantum in quantum sensus (licet illa immutatio non possit separari a naturali immutatione pro statu viae), et ideo recipit speciem sine materia ut sic." Here Scotus is concerned to mark the change involved in sensation as the intentional change although he notes that in the case of touch the intentional change is not able to be separated from the natural change, in this life. Thus, even if there is a natural change, it is not the change involved in sensation.

meaning that the patient receives the form without preceding material conditions.⁶⁰⁰

Scotus explains that the sense is not disposed to receiving the species or the form of the sensible object as prime matter is so disposed, therefore, the sense receives without matter, that is, without material disposition.⁶⁰¹

Scotus then considers an objection that since the sensitive power is the same as the essence of the soul, and the soul is purely spiritual and can only receive something from a purely spiritual agent, then the sensitive power cannot receive the species of the sense object which is corporeal.⁶⁰² But Scotus contends that the sensitive power is not the soul alone, but includes the organ, and thus is able to receive the species of the corporeal sense object, and moreover, he claims that the sensitive power, even as it includes the organ, remains really identical to the essence of the soul.⁶⁰³ Thus, the “sensitive power with the organ is such a cause of sensing.”⁶⁰⁴ Scotus further claims that two partial causes, the sensitive power and the organ, unite (*concurrunt*) in the act of sensing itself in such a way that the sensitive power is inseparable from the organ.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁰ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 6: “Aliquando patiens non est eodem modo dispositum, et tunc recipit sine materia, non quia forma in ipso recepta sit sine materia. . . sed quia recipit formam non cum materiali dispositione praecedente. . .”

⁶⁰¹ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 6: “. . . quod sensus non est eodem modo dispositus ad recipiendum speciem vel formam obiecti sensibilis sicut materia prima, et ideo recipit speciem eius sine materia, id est sine dispositione materiae.”

⁶⁰² Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 7: “Sed contra, potentia sensitiva, ut dictum est, est idem quod essentia animae; sed essentia non potest recipere aliquid ab agente pure naturali corporali, sed ab agente pure spirituali; igitur, cum obiectum sensu sit corporale, potentia sensitiva non poterit ab eo speciem recipere.” (my translation)

⁶⁰³ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 8: “Quia igitur potentia sensitiva propinqua non est anima tantum, immo includit organum, ideo potest ab obiecto speciem recipere, stante identitate reali ipsius potentiae cum animae essentia.” (my translation)

⁶⁰⁴ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 8: “. . . potentia sensitiva cum organo est talis causa sentiendi.” (my translation)

⁶⁰⁵ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 5, p. 12: “Modo ita est quod ad actum sentiendi concurrunt per se duae causae partiales ex parte hominis, scilicet potentia sensitiva et organum, et ideo requiritur utrumque et neutrum sufficit, et potentia sensitiva ut sic est inseparabilis ab organo.” I chose to translate “*concurrunt*” as “unite” because of Scotus’ emphasis of the inseparability of the sensitive power from the bodily organ.

From these passages it is clear that Scotus accepts the distinction between natural change and spiritual change, where spiritual change is the change involved in sensation such that the form is not received according to material disposition, but according to intentional existence. That the spiritual change is a corporeal event is also clear from these passages, for Scotus says explicitly that what receives the form is not the sensitive power alone, but the composite of the organ and sensitive power receives the form. Whether the change involved in sensation is a corporeal change the question that I turn to now.

4.2.2 Sensation: Corporeal or Incorporeal Change

In the *Quodlibetal Questions* Scotus claims: “to feel or be sentient is to have sensation as a form.”⁶⁰⁶ He clarifies the meaning of this statement observing that “. . . the sense in which the sensation is subjectively received would be sensing.”⁶⁰⁷ And so he concludes, “To sense, then is to receive or have a sensation.”⁶⁰⁸ Scotus is clear that what receives the species in sensation is the sense organ, or the organic part of the sense.⁶⁰⁹ In another passage in the *Ordinatio* he carefully characterizes the organ as the composite of a part of the body and the power of the soul and to say that the object is in the organ such that the whole object is sufficiently present when the species is present in that part of the

⁶⁰⁶ *Quodl.*, 13.84 [28]: “. . . sic sentire, vel esse sentientem, est habere sensationem sicut formam.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 308.

⁶⁰⁷ *Quodl.*, 13.84 [28]: “. . . sed ipse sensus in quo iubiective, recipitur sensatio.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 308.

⁶⁰⁸ *Quodl.*, 13.84 [28]: “. . . est igitur recipere, vel habere sensationem. . .” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 308.

⁶⁰⁹ Scotus. I Ord. d. 3, p. 3, q. 2 [Balic III: 299]: “Illa autem ‘informatio’ est propria species, quae recipitur in parte organi, scilicet in corpore sic mixto. . .”

body.⁶¹⁰ In Question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Scotus explains how he understands the sense organ that receives a sense object:

The proximate recipient of any sensitive operation, however is primarily composed of matter and form, as is clear from the opening passages of *De sensu et sensato*, for what is the subject of vision is not the soul itself, but the organ composed of soul and a definite part of the body. It is not the soul, nor any part thereof, nor the form of the chemical compounds that are in a definite part of the body, but it is the form of the organ as a whole which is the proximate ground for receiving the vision, like humanity is the form of man as a whole.

Hence it appears clear that if we call an “organ” that part of the whole animal which is the proximate subject of sensation, we must say it is composed of the soul as the principle of the operation and of a part of the body structured in a certain way, and then it will be clear why a blind eye is an “eye” only in a qualified sense, for it is only one part of that composite which is meant to be called an eye and is missing the other part needed for a complete eye.⁶¹¹

Scotus insists here that it is the “form of the organ as a whole” (*forma totius organi*) that is the “proximate ground of receiving” (*proxima ratio recipiendi*).

Scotus is not original in his claims here and appears to be influenced by Giles of Rome, who, according to Alluntis and Wolter, while not originating this notion of “the form of the whole,” popularized it.⁶¹² It appears that the notion of the form of the whole indicates that the union of the bodily organ with the soul brings into being a different kind of entity unlike the inanimate wax in Aristotle’s example. Considering how Scotus

⁶¹⁰ Scotus, I Ord. d. 3, p. 3, q. 1 [Balic III: 236-37]: “Sed potentia organicae dedit ut possit habere obiectum sit praesens non in potentia ipsa sed in organo, hoc est in parte corporis quam perficit potentia organica: et ista praesentia sufficit, quia totum—compositum ex parte corporis sic mixta et ex potentia—est organum; et huic toti obiectum sufficienter est praesens quando species est in illa parte corporis.”

⁶¹¹ *Quodl.*, 9.28, [11]: “. . . quaelibet autem operatio sensitiva est primo compositi ex materia et forma, sicut proprii receptivi sicut patet in principio De Sensu et Sensato enim ipsa anima est immediate receptiva visionis, sed ipsum organum, quod est compositum ex anima, et determinata parte corporis est proxima ratio recipiendi visionem, nec est anima, nec aliquid animae nec illa forma mixtionis, quae est in determinata parte corporis, sed forma totius organi eo modo, quo humanitas est forma totius hominis, est proxima ratio recipiendi visionem. Ex hoc patet, quod si organum dicatur illa pars totius animalis, in qua tanquam in proximo receptivo, recipitur sensatio, organum dicitur esse aliquid compositum ex anima, ut est principium talis operationis, et ex parte corporis sic mixta, et tunc patet, quare oculus caecus non est oculus, nisi secundum quid: quia non est nisi altera pars compositi, quod natum esset dici oculus oarens alia parte, qua complete oculus est oculus.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 227.

⁶¹² Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 227. See also, Giles of Rome, *Aegidii Romani Theoremata de esse et essentia*, ed. E. Hocedez (Louvain, 1930), 44-45.

understands the whole as greater than the sum of its parts and his careful treatment of unity, Scotus' focus here becomes even more intriguing. While certainly Aquinas too understands the sense organ as the composite of the sensitive soul and a bodily organ, he insists that sensation is primarily passive. Scotus' emphasis in this passage, that the form of the organ as a whole is the proximate ground of receiving the species, recognizes the unique capacities that the sense organ as a composite has over and above the characteristics that either of its components has alone, that is, the sense organ is alive and therefore has capacities or powers that are peculiar to a living being. It seems clear that Scotus embraces Aristotle's homonymy principle, namely, a body that is not living can be called a body in name only, for he says that an eye that is blind cannot be properly called an eye.⁶¹³ Not only does Scotus' use of the notion of the "form of the whole" emphasize the complete unity of the ensouled bodily organ, but it also reshapes the view of sensation from a primarily passive process to an active process. Wax may be able to receive the impression of the gold ring, but, I contend, a living sense organ receives the form as an attentive receiver. I will return to this claim later, the point to take here is that Scotus clearly understands the sense as a composite of the sensitive soul and the bodily organ.

In Question 13 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Scotus discusses Aristotle's claim that the senses are acted upon. Since the senses are acted upon, they are altered, and Scotus understands this alteration as a bodily movement: "for sensation results from a bodily movement and the sense being acted upon."⁶¹⁴ Scotus contends further that the

⁶¹³ See Cross 2003, 275.

⁶¹⁴ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.61 [21]: ". . . et ipsi sensus alterantur, patiuntur enim: actio enim ipsorum motus est per corpus, patiente aliquid sensu. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 300. (Text is italicized in the Wadding edition.)

sense can be said to be altered, because: “in this something composite receives something extended and from a natural agent locally present.”⁶¹⁵ It is clear that Scotus understands that sensation involves a bodily change, that it is not simply an event that takes place in a corporeal organ, but the corporeal organ is itself altered. He does not elaborate however, on what this change is.

In the *QMA* Scotus claims that the action of the species in the organ is a real action.⁶¹⁶ Since Aristotle claims in *De Anima* that sensible qualities in excess destroy the organs of sense, Scotus contends that the sensible qualities only do this by way of the species that is received by the sense organ, and therefore, the species is a source of real action.⁶¹⁷ The sensible species, Scotus says, seems to be a real accident.⁶¹⁸ Etzkorn and Wolter explain that the species is an accidental quality in the subject in which it exists,

⁶¹⁵ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.62 [21]: “Sensus autem per oppositum potest dici alterari, et quia ibi compositum quantum recipit, et quia ab agente naturali; cui est localiter praesens.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 301.

⁶¹⁶ Scotus, *QMA*, b. 5, q. 7. p. 3[1]: “Species in organo habet actionem realem, quia “excellens sensibile corrumpit sensum”, II De anima. Non nisi per speciem, ergo species est quo est actio realis. Ergo videtur quod species sit accidens reale.” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 439.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid. See also, Dominik Perler, “What Am I Thinking About? John Duns Scotus and Peter Aureol on Intentional Objects,” *Vivarium* 32:1 (1994), 78; Perler 2003; and Dominik Perler, “Duns Scotus on Signification,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 3: 97-120. Perler explains the ontological status of the species as an accident. (103) Perler also explains the difference between sensible species and the intelligible species: “The intelligible species is a mental entity—ontologically speaking, a quality of the intellect—which is produced by the intellect on the basis of a sensible species and which functions to represent the understood thing. . . Sensible species and intelligible species are distinct, since they are in two distinct parts of the soul. In contrast to the sensible species, the intelligible species is not merely a passing imprint of the thing, but a cognitive image that can exist even when the represented thing is not present.” (102-103) I want to point out here the real difference between sensible species and the intelligible species is not how long they remain, rather the difference is that the sensible species is held in a bodily organ whereas the intelligible species is in the inorganic intellect. Following from this difference, the sensible species exists under material conditions, which Scotus understands as both “the here and the now” and singularity. The intelligible species does not exist under material conditions and is able to represent the object as a universal. Since Scotus follows Aristotle in holding that the intellect cannot think without the phantasm, there is a sense image or phantasm that is held in the internal senses and remains longer than the passing sensible species. The phantasm mediates between the sensible species and the intelligible species. The important point to note here is that the sensible species, the phantasm, and the intelligible species, being species, all have the same ontological status of accident, they differ in terms of how they represent the object. As will be discussed in the next section, Scotus recognizes the species as an intention, that is, it exists according to intentional existence.

whether this be the object itself, the medium, or the soul of the knowing subject.⁶¹⁹ From this passage, it seems that the corporeal change involved in sensation is the reception of the species which is itself an accident and as such effects a real change. But what is the nature of this species? What is its ontological status?

4.2.3 The Ontological Status of the Sensible Form

That Scotus understands the species as an accident is important. As discussed in Chapter 3, we saw that Scotus argues that accident is not synonymous with inherence, and that the accident is an individual thing in its own right such that it does not depend on its inherence in a substance to be what it is. As Scotus contends in the *QMA*: “the entity of the accident is formally other than the entity of its subject.”⁶²⁰ In the discussion of Question 9 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*, we saw that in his account of per se being, Scotus contends that the accident can be a per se being when it does not inhere in a subject. Given that Scotus understands the species as an accident, the fact that an accident is not necessarily synonymous with inherence, helps to understand how the sensible quality can be received in the sense organ without inhering in it in the ordinary way in which an accident inheres in a subject. What has to be resolved is how the sensible species as an accidental quality can effect a real change in the sense, a corporeal change, without actually inhering in it, as well as what this corporeal change is. I will attend first to the question of how the sensible species can be present in the sense organ without inhering in it, at least in an ordinary way. To this end, I will consider Scotus’

⁶¹⁹ Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 438. See their footnote 1.

⁶²⁰ Scotus, *QMA*, b. 5, q. 7, p. 44[7]: “. . . quia entitas accidentis est alia ab entitate subiecti formaliter. . .” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 449.

discussion of *lux* and *lumen* in the *Ordinatio*. In the course of this discussion Scotus argues that *lux* is able to exist totally in air without changing air and it does so as an intention (*lumen*) that is neither spiritual, nor corporeal, though, it is extended.⁶²¹

In the *Ordinatio*, b. 2, d. 13, Scotus investigates the distinction between *lux* and *lumen*.⁶²² In his discussion Scotus contends that *lux* is not a substance because it is sensible through itself. A substance can never be directly sensed, it is always indirectly known through the sensing of accidents.⁶²³ Scotus claims that *lux* is an accident.⁶²⁴ He contends further that *lumen*, the species of light, is not “a complete substance, that is, subsisting through itself; because it is neither spiritual, since it is extendable, nor corporeal, because then it would be two bodies at the same time.”⁶²⁵ Now, *lux* is completely in air in such a way that it neither moves air when it arrives, nor moves air when it leaves.⁶²⁶ If *lux* somehow moves air, that is, changes or alters air, then air would

⁶²¹ See Tachau 1988, 58. Tachau notes that Scotus “specifically rejects the possibility that species are spiritual, corporeal, material, or that they are a substantial form,” as Henry of Ghent did before him. See also, Scotus, I *Ord.* d. 3, p. 3, q. 2: That Scotus does not consider the species to be spiritual is something that I will attend to in the course of the discussion in section 4.2.3, after I discuss how he understands the nature of an intention. That it is not spiritual is an important claim in terms of understanding the corporeality of the process especially in regards to the questions that emerged from the discussion of Aquinas’ account. As will be made clear, Scotus gives real being to the species, but it is a diminished being (*esse diminutum*).

⁶²² Tachau 1988, 58. Tachau notes that Scotus’ most extensive discussion of the *species in medio* is found in II *Sent.* d. 13. [edited and examined in the four extant versions by Edward R. McCarthy, *Medieval Light Theory and Optics and Duns Scotus’ Treatment of Light in D. 13 of Book II of his Commentary on the Sentences*, Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1976.] I will here use McCarthy’s translation of the *Ordinatio*, b. 2, d. 13 passages as well as the Latin version that is found in his dissertation. Following McCarthy, I will leave “*lux*” and “*lumen*” untranslated in my discussion. As will become clear in the discussion, Scotus understands “*lumen*” to be the intention or proper species of the sensible light (*lux*).

⁶²³ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: “. . . quia *lux* est per se sensibilis. Non sic substantia, nisi per accidens.” Trans. McCarthy 1976, 329. See also Wolter . . . Wolter observes that Scotus emphasizes repeatedly that substance is not something that we can sense, rather it is the accident that moves the sense.

⁶²⁴ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: “Lux etiam in aliquo est accidens; ergo in nullo est substantia.” Trans. McCarthy 1976, 330.

⁶²⁵ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: “. . . dico quod *lumen* non est substantia completa, hoc est per se subsistens; quia neque spiritualis, cum sit sit extensibilis; neque corporalis, quia tunc duo corpora essent simul.” Trans. McCarthy 1976, 330.

⁶²⁶ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: “Est enim *lux* cum toto aere, nec oportet aerem moveri localiter ipsa adveniente, nec moveri ipsa recedente vel non adveniente lumine. . .” Trans. McCarthy 1976, 330.

not be breathable when illuminated.⁶²⁷ Somehow *lux* is in air without altering air because *lux* is in air by way of its species, *lumen*. This leads Scotus to consider the distinction between a sensible quality and a quality in which exists the species or intention of the sensible quality.⁶²⁸ Thus, he considers the meaning of intention:

It should be noted that this word intention is equivocal. Intention is in one way said to be the act of the will. In another way, it is the formal distinction in re. However the intention of the thing from which the genus is derived, differs from the intention, from which the difference is derived. The third way, is said to be common. The fourth way, is said to be an inclination toward an object, as a likeness is called a relationship to that which it is alike.⁶²⁹

It is the fourth meaning of intention that applies to the sensible species.⁶³⁰ The sensible species is an intention precisely because as a likeness (*similitudo*) it tends toward an object:

Hence an intention is not said to be that, which is held by the senses, because this way the object would be the same as the intention. But the intention is said to be that, through which, as a formal principle it is connected with the object. So whatever is the sign is the thing. According to Augustine in *De Trinitate* and *De Doctrina Christiana*, it is not convertible. Therefore in the distinction between a thing and a sign, the thing is taken as it is in reality, which is not as a sign. Although that which is a sign is also the thing. So in the distinction between a thing and its intention, although the intention is the thing itself and the sensible form to which this sense tends, that thing however is said to be the intention, which is not only the thing itself toward which the sense tends, but it is the inclination to something else, which is its proper similitude.

By this way I say that *lumen* is an intention or proper species of sensible light (*lux*) itself. Which is provable then, because, if it is not an

⁶²⁷ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: “. . . quia tunc in medio illuminato non esset respiratio aeris si illud corpus esset localiter admotum propter *lumen*.” Trans. McCarthy 1976, 331.

⁶²⁸ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: “Cum autem genus qualitatis quantum ad tertiam speciem distinguatur in qualitatem sensibilem, et in qualitatem quae est species sive *intentio* qualitatis sensibilis. . .” Trans. McCarthy 1976, 331.

⁶²⁹ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: “. . . notandum est quod huius <modi> nomen *intentio* est equivocum. Uno modo dicitur actus voluntatis intentio. Alio modo: ratio formalis in re. Sed *intentio* rei a qua accipitur genus differt ab intentione a qua accipitur differentia. Tertio modo, dicitur communiter. Quarto modo, dicitur ratio tendendi in obiectum; sicut similitudo dicitur ratio tendendi in illud cuius est.” Trans. McCarthy 1976, 331.

⁶³⁰ Tachau 1988, 62.

intention, then when applied on the sense it would impede sensation, because what is only sensible is not the cause of sensation. If it were put on the sense, it would impede sensation, because the sensible alone applied to a sense is not perceived. Thus *lumen* applied to the eye would hinder vision. Which case is false and contrary to the statement of the Commentator of the *De Sensu et Sensato*, where the Commentator wants to say, that it is necessary for *lumen* to be applied to the eye, so that it can receive the species of color and thereby see.⁶³¹

The senses do not perceive the intention, rather it is by way of the intention that the senses apprehend the object. The intention, in effect, leads the senses to the object, without itself be perceived. Through the intention the sense tends towards the object. As we saw, according Pasnau, Aquinas claims that *intentio* means the same thing as *conversio*. In Pasnau's discussion of Scotus' account of cognition, he explains that to tend (*tendere*) towards another is "to represent another."⁶³² Scotus sees the connection between the intention and the object of which it is an intention as based on a formal principle. That the intention tends towards something else, based on form, is what makes it a proper similitude. In his discussion of *lumen*, Scotus explains that it is the proper

⁶³¹ Scotus, *Ord.*, b. 2, d. 13: "Notandum est quod *intentio* non dicitur hic 'quod intendit sensus'; quia hoc modo ipsum obiectum esset intentio. Sed *intentio* dicitur hic 'illud per quod tamquam per principium formale in obiectum tendit sensus'. Et sicut quidquid est signum, est res, secundum Augustinum De Trinitate et De Doctrina Christiana, licet non econverso; et ideo in distinctione rei et signi res accipitur pro illa re quae non est signum, licet illa quae est signum sit etiam res, ita in distinctione rei et intentionis licet *intentio* sit res et form<a> sensibilis in quam possit sensus tendere, tamen illa dicitur *intentio* quae non est tantum res in quam sensus tendit, sed est ratio tendendi in alterum cuius est propria similitudo. Hoc modo dico quod *lumen* est proprie *intentio* sive species propria ipsius lucis sensibilis. Quod probatur. Tum quia si non esset intentio, tunc suprapositum sensui prohiberet sensum. Quia quod est tantum sensibile et non ratio sentiendi, si ponatur supra sensum, impedit sensationem. Quia sensibile supra sensum positum non sentitur, et ita *lumen* suprapositum oculo impediret ipsum videre. Hoc autem est falsum, et contra Commentatorem super librum De sensu et Sensato, ubi vult quod necessarium est *lumen* positum in oculo ad hoc ut recipiat species colorum et videat." Trans. McCarthy 1976, 331-332.

⁶³² Pasnau 2003, 288. Pasnau explains that representing another does not mean in the way that a word or picture represents something else, rather to represent refers to the "distinctive (and highly mysterious) way in which thoughts and perceptions are about things." Since words and pictures need an interpreter, they do not of themselves tend towards what they represent. Thoughts and perceptions, Pasnau says, are the interpretation, they tend to things of themselves. And it is in this way that they are intentional. Based on Scotus' account that the relationship between the intention and the thing of which it is an intention is a formal relationship, the act of representing does not seem so mysterious. See also Perler 2003, 166. Here Perler is primarily concerned with the intelligible species. As a species it is "immediately linked to things in the world," and it is in this way that species are understood as representational.

species of the *lux* which is the light that is sensed. Now *lumen* itself cannot be sensible because what is completely sensible cannot be the cause of sensation. The cause of sensation, as we have seen, is the species, which tends towards the object. The species cannot itself be sensible because if it were, it would block sensation. If you put the apple on your eye, you will not see the apple. Scotus uses the example of light passing through a piece of red glass to show that the species is not itself perceived.⁶³³ If you look at the colored patch of red on the wall in order to perceive the red glass, then Scotus says you will only know the glass in a derivate way. But if you were to stand in such a way that your eye is in the place where the red patch of light is on the wall, and look toward the glass, you would see the red glass properly and not see the species at all. Moreover, when the species is in the air, it is not seen. Thus, it is the species that causes the sensation of the apple, but it is the apple that is sensed. The species itself is not sensible and is therefore not perceived.

In the *QMA* Scotus delineates three degrees of sense cognition or sensitive knowledge:

The first is that of intuitive cognition which is of a thing present, and not just through a species, nor only under a knowable aspect, but in its proper nature. The second degree is of a thing known through a proper species produced from it. The third is through some species fashioned by the cognitive power from the proper species of certain things that were impressed upon it. All of these cognitions are per se.⁶³⁴

⁶³³ Scotus, *QMA*, b. 5, q. 7, p. 4: “Item, species in medio est vere visibilis; ergo res. Probatio assumpti si radius solis transeat per vitrum rubeum, potest species ruboris vitri videri in pariete ubi terminatur radius ille. Quod autem iste rubor in pariete sit species patet, quia si ponatur ibi oculus, per illud videbit ruborem in vitro.” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 439. See also, *Quodl.* 14.88 [26], addition, Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 341.

⁶³⁴ Scotus, *QMA*, b. 2, q. 3, p. 109[23]: “Primus est intuitivae cognitionis, quae est de re praesente non tantum per speciem, nec tantum sub ratione cognoscibilis, sed in propria natura. Secundus gradus est rei cognitae per speciem propriam ex se genitam. Tertius est per speciem aliquam factam a virtute cognitiva, et hoc ex speciebus aliquorum propriis sibi impressis. Omnes istae cognitiones sunt per se.” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 197-198. Scotus discusses a fourth degree of sensitive knowledge that he calls “knowledge per accident,” a knowledge of the object or its opposite by way of negation. See p. 110:

Scotus offers the following examples: for the first, sight sees color; for the second, the phantasy imagines a color that was seen; and for the third, the phantasy imagines a gold mountain.⁶³⁵ I want to draw attention to the first degree of sensitive knowledge where the sense apprehends the sense object as present, “not just through a species, nor only under a knowable aspect, but in its proper nature.” Sensation, as understood at the level of intuitive cognition, apprehends the sense object as it is actually present and existing. We are not able to sense something whenever we wish, we only sense something that is actually present to us. And when we do sense an object, Scotus contends that the exterior sensation is of the object immediately, and therefore: “it is accidental that there be a species there for the sake of sensation.”⁶³⁶ Scotus explains that the species is required in the interior sense because the object is not present in itself.⁶³⁷ In sensation the species is not the object of the senses, rather the object of the senses is the external sense object.

We see color, not the species of color. Etzkorn and Wolter explain:

That is, when the sensible “species” in the medium encounters the eye, its effect is sensation; the sensation therefore is distinct from the “species” that causes it. Though the “species” causes the sensation qua quality in the eye, it is not what is cognitively sensed as object, and hence if it is known by the internal sense as something on-going, this is accidental. Or ‘accidental’ may refer to the fact that it is not what is sensed, but it is the object outside that is sensed . . .”⁶³⁸

The species is that by which the object is sensed, not that which is sensed.

“Ultra hos gradus cognitionis est cognitio per accidens; et hoc: vel oppositi per remotionem, vel obiecti.” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 198.

⁶³⁵ Scotus, *QMA*, b. 2, q. 3, p. 109[23]: “Verbi gratia, de primo gradu, visus videt colorem; de secundo, phantasia imaginatur colorem visum; de tertio, phantasia imaginatur montem aureum. . .” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 198.

⁶³⁶ Scotus, *QMA*, b. 5, q. 7, p. 106[7]: “. . .species in organo extra non est ratio repraesentandi obiectum ut cognitum, sed sensatio exterior est obiecti immediate. Unde accidit quod ibi sit species propter sensationem.” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 465-466.

⁶³⁷ Scotus, *QMA*, b. 5, q. 7, p. 106[7]: “In interiori vero requiritur ita quod interior est praecise obiecti, ut lucet in specie, quia non est obiecti in se praesentis.” Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 466.

⁶³⁸ Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 466. See their footnote 108.

From this discussion we can take the following points, the species is an accident and therefore a thing. The species is not spiritual nor is it corporeal. This is puzzling because Scotus contends that it is somehow extendable but not material, as he says that *lumen* is an intention and as such it is extendable. That it is extendable seems to mean that it can be in something that is material, while the intention itself is not material or corporeal. For example, Scotus considers sense knowledge to be extended because it is in the sense organ.⁶³⁹ What kind of existence does the species have? Scotus understands the existence of the intention or species as diminished being (*esse diminutum*): “the cognitive object has diminished being, however, the extramental object has absolute and real being.”⁶⁴⁰ Diminished being is the being that an internal object has, or the being that a known object has.⁶⁴¹ In the *Quodlibetal Questions* Scotus claims that the proper species of an object is a lesser entity than the object itself.⁶⁴² As Perler points out, diminished being should not be understood in terms of quantity but should be understood as “existence in a certain respect,” opposed to existence absolutely (*esse simpliciter*).⁶⁴³ Perler explains that a stone taken in itself has existence absolutely, but a stone taken as an intelligible being has existence in a certain respect, that is, it is the object of an intellectual act.⁶⁴⁴ Thus, the stone as an intelligible being has intentional existence (*esse*

⁶³⁹ See Cross 2003, 266. Cross here explains that intellectual knowledge cannot be extended, while sense knowledge is. The intellect operates without organs, where as the sense operates through an organ.

⁶⁴⁰ Scotus, IV Oxon. D. 1, q. 1: “obiectum cognitum habet esse diminutum; obiectum autem extra habet esse simpliciter et reale.” As quoted in Tachau 1988, 69, see footnote 53. (my translation above)

⁶⁴¹ Tachau 1988, 58. Tachau explains that species have only diminished being and belong to the Aristotelian category of quality. See also, Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 501. Alluntis & Wolter explain that the expression (*ens diminutum*) originated in the Arabian translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and Averroes’ commentary on it. Scotus uses it to express the kind of being a thing acquires in the mind or intellect by being known. See also Pasnau 2003, 289; Perler 1994, 75; A. Maurer, “*Ens diminutum*: A Note on its Origin and Meaning,” *Mediaeval Studies*, 12 (1950), 216-222.

⁶⁴² Scotus, *Quodl.* 14.78[22]: Trans. Alluntis & Wolter, 337.

⁶⁴³ Perler 1994, 75.

⁶⁴⁴ Perler 1994, 75.

intentionale).⁶⁴⁵ Diminished being is identified with intentional existence. As we saw above, Scotus contrasts diminished being with real being. In a passage in the *Oxon*. He also contrasts real existence with intentional existence.⁶⁴⁶ So the species that is received in the senses is able to be in the sense organ as an *intentio*, in much the same way as light is totally in the air by way of its species, *lumen*, which is an *intentio*. Thus the species or *intentio* is not a body, nor is it spiritual. As an *intentio* it represents its object but is of a lesser being than its object. In sensation, Scotus says that something extended is received by the sense organ, and this something extended is the species.

4.2.4 The Cognitive Activity of Sensation

In this section I will discuss the question concerning the activity of the sense. In Question 12 of the *QDA*, Scotus' understanding of sensation stands apart from Aquinas' understanding. Here he considers whether the powers of the soul, intellective or sensitive are only passive.⁶⁴⁷ In this question he specifically argues against passivity as conceived by Aquinas. Scotus says that Aristotle's account attributes to the impressed species, rather than the powers of the soul, the acts of sensing and intellection.⁶⁴⁸ Scotus claims that "with respect to their operations, the powers of the soul are active," adding that

⁶⁴⁵ Perler 1994, 75. Perler goes on to explain that the entire stone, in all its aspects, is the object of the intellective act. The reason it can be an object to the intellect is that it is made present by way of the intelligible species which is itself made through the activity of the agent intellect with the phantasm. Since the phantasm is produced by way of the sensible species, and the whole object is in the sensible species, the intellect is able to know the object. (76-77)

⁶⁴⁶ *Oxon*. I, d. 3, q. 4: ". . . quia objectum in quantum habet esse in intellectu, non habet esse reale, sed tantum intentionale." Trans. Wolter 1987, 121.

⁶⁴⁷ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 12: "Utrum potentiae animae, scilicet intellectiva et sensitiva, sint tantum passivae."

⁶⁴⁸ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 12, p. 6-12: For Scotus' treatment of Aquinas here see . 6-12. Scotus sees Aquinas as holding that the powers of the soul are passive with respect to the species impressed by the object (" . . . dicunt illas esse passivas primo respectu speciei impressae ab obiecto. . .") Scotus contends that on Aquinas' account the acts of sensing and understanding are attributed more to the species than the powers in the soul, and this is false (" . . . sequitur quod actus sentiendi et intelligendi magis debent attribui speciei quam potentiae, quod falsum est; quia species non sentit nec intelligit sicut potentia.") (9)

otherwise they would be vilified.⁶⁴⁹ Scotus appeals to Averroes here, contending that intellection and sensation are immanent actions in the agent.⁶⁵⁰ These actions are not found in the object but are found in the human being who senses and who understands.⁶⁵¹ Moreover, the actions of sensing and understanding are vital operations, and are therefore, intrinsic, efficient principles.⁶⁵² In Question 13 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Scotus gives an extended discussion on immanent operations.

At the beginning of the discussion Scotus distinguishes between an action and an operation. An action is “that productive action or at least an activity which in some fashion causes its term to exist,” whereas an operation is “an intrinsic act by which the operator himself is ultimately perfected.”⁶⁵³ What Scotus seeks to establish in this discussion is that in an operation there is some absolute entity, meaning that the operation can be understood apart from its object or term. The first proof that he considers is based on the nature of perfection. The ultimate perfection of a living substance destined by

⁶⁴⁹ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 12, p. 21: “Dicendum igitur quod potentiae animae respectu suarum operationum sunt activae; aliter nimis vilescerent, ut patebit.” Scotus is always interested in recognizing and preserving the perfection of the cognitive power. To say that the powers of the soul are not active is not to preserve their perfection. In a passage in the *Ordinatio*, d.3, p. 3, q. 1, Scotus uses the same expression, that a cognitive power would be vilified, when he argues that the intellect needs to have its own object present to it, and not the presence of an object that is begged (*mendicata*) from the phantasm. To have to beg from the phantasm would greatly vilify the intellectual power: “. . .ut intellectualis est, non habet obiectum sufficienter praesens si non habet ipsum nisi in praesentia mendicata a virtute phantastica. Hoc ergo multum vilificat naturam intellectivam ut intellectiva est, quia removetur ab ea illud quod est perfectionis in potentia cognitiva. . .”

⁶⁵⁰ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 12, p. 21: “. . .sed expresse dicit COMMENTATOR quod intelligere et sentire sunt actiones immanentes in agente.”

⁶⁵¹ Scotus, *QDA*, q. 12, p. 21: “Certum est autem quod manent in sentiente et intelligente, non autem in obiecto extrinseco; igitur obiectum non est activum talium, sed potius homo sentiens et intelligens, mediantibus suis potentiis animae.”

⁶⁵² Scotus, *QDA*, q. 12, p. 24: “Item, operationes vitales sunt effectivae a principio vitali et intrinseco, si sint naturales; actual sentiendi et intelligendi sunt operations vitales, et etiam substantiales sentienti et intelligenti; igitur a principio intrinseco effectivo.”

⁶⁵³ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.4 [2]: “. . .quia ipsa est semper ad terminum aliquem accipientem aliquo modo esse per ipsam actionem: sed intelligitur quod sit actio, hoc est, operatio, qua agens tanquam actu ultimo perficitur.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 285.

nature for sensitive and intellectual activity is not a mere relation. But its operation is the ultimate perfection of such a substance, therefore, its operation is not a mere relation.⁶⁵⁴

Scotus argues that the “ultimate perfection of the living nature is what such a nature desires above all else by natural desire.”⁶⁵⁵ Scotus appeals to the nature of beatitude and the authority of Aristotle and Augustine to conclude that “the most desirable end is an activity or consists in an operation.”⁶⁵⁶ As discussed in Chapter 2, the beatific vision requires that the divine essence be present and existing in itself. In the beatific vision the cognizer is able to cognize the divine essence in its actual existence. What seems to be required is that the cognizer’s activity is not one of receptivity only but one of actively attending to the object that is actually present as it is actually present. Thus, the ultimate perfection of an intellectual nature must consist in an intrinsic operation.

In the second Article of Question 13 Scotus considers whether an operation does in fact have a real relationship with its object. In the course of his discussion he distinguishes between intuitive cognition and abstractive cognition. He contends that any perception involving the external senses is able to grasp its object in its actual existence, and this is a “knowledge of the existent as such.”⁶⁵⁷ The example he offers is seeing color, and generally any sensation involving the exterior senses.⁶⁵⁸ There is another

⁶⁵⁴ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.8 [3]: “. . .operatio est huiusmodi perfectio substantiae vivae, quae nata est operari, puta viventis vita sensitiva, vel intellectiva; igitur operatio non est sola relatio. . .” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 285.

⁶⁵⁵ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.9 [3]: “. . .sed ultima perfectio naturae viventis a tali natura summe desideratur desiderio naturali. . .” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 285.

⁶⁵⁶ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.11 [4]: “. . .saltem in hoc omnes conveniunt, quod sinem ultimum, et maxime desiderabilem dicunt esse operationem, vel in operatione consistere.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 286.

⁶⁵⁷ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.27 [8]: “Aliqua ergo cognitio est per se existentis, sicut quae attingit obiectum in sua propria existentia actuali.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 286.

⁶⁵⁸ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.27 [8]: “Exemplum de visione coloris, et communiter in sensatione sensus exterioris.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 290.

knowledge in which the object is known, but not existing as such.⁶⁵⁹ In this case the knowledge of the object is indifferent to the object's actual existence. The example that Scotus gives imagining color since one can imagine color both when it exists and when it does not exist.⁶⁶⁰ He then contends that this same distinction is found at the intellectual level.

Scotus says that it is obvious that there is intellectual knowledge of the nonexistent, but he contends that there can be intellectual knowledge of the “*existent qua existent*,” and the beatific vision must be just such a case. If the knowledge of the beatific object is indifferent to the object's actual existence, then the blessed could be happy with a nonexistent object, but this is absurd. In the beatific vision there is a “clear face-to-face vision of this object, since the act of knowing it tends to this object as present in itself with its own actual existence.”⁶⁶¹ The intellect must be able on its own to tend to an extramental object that is present to it.

In Question 6 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Scotus makes these same points.

Abstractive cognition is

indifferent as to whether the object is existing or not, and also whether it is present in reality or not. We often experience this act in ourselves, for universals and the essences of things we grasp equally well whether they exist extramentally in some subject or not, or whether we have an instance of them actually present or not. . . This act of understanding which can be called “scientific,” because it is a prerequisite condition for knowing the conclusion and understanding the principle, can very appropriately be

⁶⁵⁹ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.27 [8]: “Aliqua etiam est cognitio obiecti, non ut existentis in se, sed vel obiectum non existit: vel saltem illa cognitio non est eius, ut actualiter existentis.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 290.

⁶⁶⁰ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.27[8]: “Exemplum, ut imaginatio coloris quia contingit imaginari rem, quando non existit, sicut quando existit.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 290.

⁶⁶¹ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.28 [8]: “. . .de quo dicitur habere claram visionem, sive facialem: propter hoc, quod actus eius cognoscendi tendit in illud, ut in se praesens in propria existentia actuali.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 291.

called “abstractive” because it “abstracts” the object from existence or non-existence, from presence or absence.”⁶⁶²

Thus, abstractive cognition is a cognition that is indifferent to the existence of the object. Intuitive cognition, on the contrary, is cognition that is of the object as present and existing in itself:

It is knowledge precisely of a present object as present and of an existing object as existing. . . On the other hand, a sense power has such perfection in its knowledge, because it can attain an object in itself as existing and present in its real existence, and not just diminutively in a kind of imperfect likeness of itself.⁶⁶³

Scotus again makes the same point as he does in Question 13 that the beatific vision requires intuitive cognition:

Since abstractive cognition concerns equally the existent and the nonexistent, if the beatific act were of this sort one could be beatifically happy with a nonexistent object, which is impossible. Also, abstractive knowledge is possible where the object is not attained in itself but only in some likeness. Beatitude, on the contrary, can never be found unless the beatific object is reach immediately and in itself.⁶⁶⁴

Scotus seems to say here that the difference between abstractive cognition and intuitive is in terms of whether a likeness is involved. This has led some to consider that no species

⁶⁶² Scotus, *Quodl.* 6.18[7]: “. . . unus indifferenter potest esse respectu obiecti existentis, et non existentis, et indifferenter etiam respectu obiecti, non realiter praesentis, sicut et realiter praesentis: istum actum frequenter experimur in nobis: quia universali, sive quiditates rerum intelligimus aequae, sive habeant ex natura rei esse extra in aliquo supposito, sive non: et ita de praesentia et absentia. . . iste actu intelligendi, qui scientificus dici potest, quia praevius, et requisitus ad scire conclusionis, et ad intelligere principii, potest satis proprie dici abstractivus, quia abstrahit obiectum ab existentia, et non existentia: praesentia, et absentia.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 135-136.

⁶⁶³ Scotus, *Quodl.* 6.19[8]: “actus intelligendi est. . . praecise sit obiecti praesentis, ut praesentis: et existentis, ut existentis. . . sensitiva autem habet hanc perfectionem in cognitione sua: quia potest obiectum attingere in se, ut existens, et ut praesens est in existentia reali: et non tantum diminute attingendo ipsum in quadam perfectione diminuta . . .” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 136.

⁶⁶⁴ Scotus, *Quodl.* 6.20[8]: “. . . quia abstractiva est aequae existentis, et non existentis, et sic beatitudo potest esse in obiecto non existente: quod est impossibile: abstractiva etiam posset haberi, licet obiectum non attingatur in se, sed in similitudine: beatitudo autem nunquam habetur, nisi ipsum obiectum beatificum immediate in se attingatur. . .” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 137.

is involved in intuitive cognition.⁶⁶⁵ In his account of Scotus' understanding of intuitive cognition, Wolter contends, on the contrary, that a species is involved in intuitive cognition. I am in agreement with Wolter's reading. Every time that Scotus discusses intuitive cognition, he always uses sensation as an example of intuitive cognition, and in particular, the seeing of a color. Sensation always involves a species. As we have seen, the species as an ⁶⁶⁶*intentio*, tends to the external object. It is the external object that is sensed. Moreover, we can only sense when there is an external object present, not any time we wish. In sensation we are sensing an object that is actually there, as it is present and existing. Intuitive cognition is the hallmark of sensation and redefines sensation in subtle ways because it requires that the cognitive faculty, by way of the species, to actively apprehend the object.

We can also consider the question of the involvement of the species in intuitive cognition by considering a passage in Question 14 of the *Quodlibetal Questions* where Scotus is concerned with the distinction between imperfect and perfect knowledge. He defines perfect knowledge in terms of the object so that perfect knowledge "captures the object as such; i.e., it is proper and distinct knowledge of the object as it is in itself."⁶⁶⁷ Imperfect knowledge is knowledge that "captures the object only incidentally or in some common and confused concept."⁶⁶⁸ Distinct knowledge can be either mediate or immediate where immediate knowledge means that the object is not understood by means

⁶⁶⁵ See, for example, Sebastian Day 1947, 67. Day contends that in abstractive cognition the object moves the intellect by way of a species, but in an intuitive cognition, the object moves the intellect by way of its own existence. For discussions on intuitive cognition, see Tachau 1988, 68-81; Stephen Dumont 1989.

⁶⁶⁶ Allan Wolter, "Duns Scotus on Intuition, Memory, and Our Knowledge of Individuals," in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1990), 98-122. See p. 101.

⁶⁶⁷ Scotus, *Quodl.* 14.7[2]: ". . .quod scilicet illa intelligatur perfecta, qua attingitur obiectum sub perfecta ratione suae cognoscibilitatis; hoc est, per se propria et distincta. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 317

⁶⁶⁸ Scotus, *Quodl.* 14.7[2]: ". . .imperfecta dicatur illa, qua attingitur tantum per accidens, vel tantum in aliquo conceptu communi, vel confuso." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 317.

of some other object, it “excludes any medium that is itself known.”⁶⁶⁹ Thus, mediate knowledge is knowledge that is known by means of another known object. Now the intellect is capable of distinct immediate knowledge because the intelligible species, like the sensible species in sensation, is not itself known, but is the means by which the object is made present to the intellect. Day considers the following passage in Question 14 to give evidence that no species is involved in intuitive cognition:

Any such intellection, namely, that which is *per se*, proper, and immediate, requires the presence of the object in all its proper intelligibility as object [*propria ratio objecti*]. If the intellection is intuitive, this means in its own existence it is present as object. If the intellection is abstractive, it is present in something which represents it in all its proper and essential meaning as a knowable object.⁶⁷⁰

Rather than being evidence that no species is required in intuitive cognition, this passage explicitly says that in intuitive cognition, the object is present in its own existence. That means that the object is actually present to the cognitive faculty, like color is present to the seeing eye. In the case of intellectual intuitive cognition, the intellect would enjoy the same actual presence of an external object that the sense does, the example being the divine essence in the beatific vision.⁶⁷¹ The point that I want to make here is that intuitive cognition in which the object is what is sensed or known requires the presence of the object through the species, which itself is not perceived or known.. The reason that this point is critical is that Scotus’ repeated characterization of sensation as intuitive

⁶⁶⁹ Scotus, *Quodl.* 14.8[2]: “. . .cognitio distincta vel est mediata, vel immediata. Dico immediatam, quando obiectum non mediante aliquo alio obiecto intelligitur per quod, vel in quo intelligatur: ita quod hic excluditur medium cognitum, non autem medium, quod esset praecise ratio cognoscendi, vel intelligendi.” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 317.

⁶⁷⁰ Scotus, *Quodl.* 14.36[10]: “. . .quia omnis talis intellectio, scilicet per se, et propria, et immediata requirit ipsum obiectum sub propria ratione obiecti praesens, et hoc vel in propria existentia, puta si est intuitiva; vel in aliquo perfecto repraesentante ipsum sub propria et per se ratione cognoscibilis, si fuerit abstractiva. . .” Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 324-325.

⁶⁷¹ See *Quodl.* 6 where Scotus discusses the fact that the intellect knows intuitively those objects that are present to it in this life.

cognition redefines the process of sensation and emphasizes that the sense must be active in this process. Consider the following passage:

The cognitive potency not only has to receive the species of the object but also to tend to the object through its act. And this second thing is more essential to the potency, because the first is required because of some imperfection of the potency. And the object is more principally an object because the potency tends toward it rather than because it [the object] impresses a species. This is evident, for if God were to impress a species on the intellect or the eye, [the intellect or the eye] would tend to the object just as it does now, and the object would be just as much an object [as it would be if it impressed the species rather than God]. But God would not be the object, because the potency does not tend to him and nevertheless he impressed it, just as he impresses upon an angel the species of creatures. Therefore this is true; there is some *per se* moving agent for any potency that is passive. But there is no need that in apprehending potencies that what moves them be the proper object of that potency under the aspect in virtue of which it is the motive, but what is necessary is that what terminates the act of potency is the aspect under which it is the object.⁶⁷²

What defines sensation is not the receptivity of the form or species, but more properly that the cognitive faculty tends toward the object. Now the species itself is understood by Scotus as an *intentio*, in representing the object it tends toward the object, in effect leading the sense to apprehend the object. But this is where the Aristotle's wax analogy falls short. The wax may be able to receive an impression, but it cannot tend towards the object through its act. Thus the operation of sense does have a real relationship to its object, but this operation is intrinsic to sense, that is, it is an immanent operation.

⁶⁷²*QMA* b. 7, q. 14, p. 29[6]: "Nam potentia cognitiva non tantum habet recipere speciem obiecti, sed etiam tendere per actum suum in obiectum. Et istud secundum est essentialius potentiae, quia primum requiritur propter imperfectionem potentiae. Et obiectum principalius est obiectum quia in ipsum tendit potentia, quam quia imprimit speciem. Quod patet: si Deus impremeret speciem intellectui vel oculo, eodem modo ferretur in obiectum sicut modo, et obiectum ita esset obiectum. Sed Deus non esset obiectum, quia in ipsum non tendit potentia, et tamen ipse imprimit, sicut impressit angelo species creaturarum. Haec ergo est vera 'cuiuslibet passivi est aliquod motivum per se'. Sed non oportet in potentiis apprehensivis quod illud motivum sit proprium obiectum potentiae sub ratione qua est motivum, sed oportet quod ipsum, sub ratione qua obiectum, terminet actum potentiae." Trans. Etzkorn & Wolter 1998, 250.

Scotus claims that unlike an action that is productive in the sense that it effects a product, an operation is one that in tending toward its term, does not produce this term, but presupposes it.⁶⁷³ He contends further, that an operation is simply the perfection of the one operating.⁶⁷⁴ Operations are dynamic (*in fieri*), always in a state of becoming.⁶⁷⁵ The operation passes into its object as its term, but the object does not derive its being from the operation, but again, the object's being is presupposed.⁶⁷⁶ In a transient action the form that is the term of the action lies outside the agent itself; in the immanent action, the form is in the agent itself.⁶⁷⁷ This means that in an immanent operation, there is a product, but the product is the operation itself, the acting itself, which is found in the agent, for example, Scotus says, the act of seeing is in the one doing the seeing.⁶⁷⁸

The distinction between immanent and transient action is certainly not unique to Scotus and finds its roots in Aristotle. In *De Anima* 2.5, as discussed in Chapter 1, Aristotle distinguishes the alteration that is involved in sensation from ordinary alteration. The alteration involved in sensation is a change to a thing's disposition or nature. The immanent operation is intrinsic to the sense organ, so that when it is operating, that is, sensing, it is acting according to its nature, it is the perfection of the agent as agent. Scotus' discussion of immanent operations must be read in context of his claim about

⁶⁷³ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.72[25]: "Operatio autem non est ad aliquem terminum accipientem esse per ipsam; imo eo modo, quo habet terminum ad quem: nec est productiva termini ad quem, nec eductiva de potentia passi: nec inductiva in passum, sed praesupponit terminum. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 305.

⁶⁷⁴ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.73[25]: ". . .operatio est perfectio simpliciter operantis. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 305.

⁶⁷⁵ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.74[25]: ". . .sive in fieri, sicut sunt operationes. . ." and 13.81 [27]: "Ad primum, operatio habet duas condiciones, in quibus convenit cum actione. Prima est, quod semper est in fieri, non dico successivo, quia operatio est indivisibilis, sed sic sic in fieri. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 305-307.

⁶⁷⁶ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.81[27]: ". . .quod operatio transit in obiectum, sicut in terminum: licet non accipiat esse per ipsam: quia praesuppositum in suo esse. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 307.

⁶⁷⁷ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.81[27]: ". . .quando igitur forma terminans actionem est extra ipsum agens: tunc actio illa transit; quando vero forma illa est in ipso agente: tunc actio est immanens. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 307.

⁶⁷⁸ Scotus, *Quodl.* 13.83[28]: ". . . ut visio in vidente. . ." Trans. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, 308.

cognition, that cognition is most properly the activity of tending toward the object through an act and his understanding of sensation as intuitive cognition, apprehending the object as it is present and existing. When read in this way, Scotus' understanding of the immanent operation involved in sensation, shifts the process of sensation as primarily passive to a primarily active process. In the passages in the *Quodlibetal Questions* where Scotus discusses the immanent operation, characterizes it as “*in fieri*” which Alluntis and Wolter translate as dynamic or becoming. That the immanent operation should be understood as dynamic is supported by Michael Sylwanowicz' reading of Scotus found in his text on Scotus' contingent causality.

Sylwanowicz argues Scotus understands being as intrinsic activity.⁶⁷⁹

Sylwanowicz understands “*in fieri*” as a dynamic process, such that for Scotus, essences are self-moving processes, i.e., essences are first and foremost activity, not passive prior to activity.⁶⁸⁰ The soul as essence is an intrinsic activity, and therefore, always fully in act. Sylwanowicz argues that being an intrinsic activity means having the capability of responding actively to the situation at hand.⁶⁸¹ The fact that being is itself intrinsic activity allows us to have a change in perspective. Sylwanowicz uses the example of a stone resting on a plank. When the plank is removed, rather than simply saying that the stone falls, Sylwanowicz contends that the stone responds actively, the removal of the

⁶⁷⁹ Michael Sylwanowicz, *Contingent Causality and the Foundations of Duns Scotus's Metaphysics* (E.J. Brill: Leiden, 1996), 1. Sylwanowicz endeavors to show how Scotus' understanding of contingent causality is not only unique to Scotus but is also rooted in his understanding of being as constituted by a self-differentiating intrinsic activity that accounts for possibility.

⁶⁸⁰ Sylwanowicz 1996, 61, 71, 104. Sylwanowicz contrasts Scotus' view of essence with Aquinas. He argues that for Aquinas, the essence is a passive potency where operation following being. For Scotus, the essence is self-moving process such that its effect is the operation itself. For Aquinas, the soul is distinct from the will, whereas for Scotus the will and the soul are only formally distinct, and both are intrinsic activities.

⁶⁸¹ Sylwanowicz 1996, 74.

plank has created a new possibility.⁶⁸² While Sylwanowicz is mainly concerned with the activity of the will, his contention that Scotus understands being as an intrinsic activity goes to the heart of Scotus' metaphysics. The emphasis that we have seen Scotus give to the activity of sensation over passivity, for example, is further supported if we understand it as grounded in such a dynamic metaphysics. The sense organ is not simply a receptive capacity, but has the ability to respond actively. Given that the sense organ is ensouled, its ability to respond actively is much more complex than the stone on the plank. Its active response is in terms of its operation, its sensing. Receiving the species as an *intentio* that leads the sense to the object, requires that the recipient be able to actively respond, that is, actively tend toward the object. Scotus is not unique in insisting on a more active cognitive process, as Tachau points out, he is influenced by Olivi.⁶⁸³ However, against Olivi, Scotus retains the species, because his concern is to account for the presence of the object to the cognitive faculty, both at the level of sensation and intellection. The presence of the object is made possible through the species as *intentio*. The *intentio* leads the cognitive faculty to apprehend the object precisely because the cognitive faculty is of an actively responding that that object which is present to it.

Conclusion

From this discussion of Scotus' account of sensation we can take the following points. First, in the *QDA* Scotus does accept the distinction of natural change and spiritual change and contends along with Aquinas that the sensible form has intentional existence in the sense organ. Second, Scotus contends, as does Aquinas, that the sense

⁶⁸² Sylwanowicz 1996, 61.

⁶⁸³ Tachau 1988, 68.

organ is a composite of the sensitive soul and a corporeal organ. In the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Scotus contends that what receives the species in sensation is the form of the sense organ as a whole. This notion emphasizes that the sense organ has unique capacities as an animate entity such that it is the fact that it can so act that there is sensation. Sensation is a corporeal event in a corporeal organ for Scotus, meaning that the presence of the species comes to exist in the sense organ. This is not a natural change but is nonetheless a corporeal change. I contend, however, that this corporeal change must be understood in the way that we have seen Scotus understands the sense organ as ensouled. Third, the species that is received by the sense organ has the ontological status of an accident, and in particular, is a quality. It is neither spiritual nor corporeal. It is rather an *intentio* that is able to be in the corporeal sense organ because it is extendable and this is comparable to the example of *lux* and *lumen*. Fourth, Scotus understands sensation most properly as a tending toward an object and in his most mature work, the *Quodlibetal Questions*, reframes the discussion of sensation by emphasizing that sensation is intuitive cognition.

Conclusion

The question that I have been concerned to answer in this dissertation is how does the immaterial intellect have access to the material phantasm in order to make an object present to the intellect? The problem is that the phantasm as a sense image or likeness exists in a bodily organ. And as we have seen, that which is corporeal cannot act on that which is incorporeal. But the nature of the species or the phantasm as an *intentio* is itself neither spiritual nor corporeal nor material, though it exists under material conditions. That the species is extendable simply seems to mean that it can be in a material subject, but its being in the material sense organ, does not change the species. The species exists under the aspect of materiality, but is not defined by it. In this way, the species is present in such a way that the cognitive faculty, sensitive or intellective, is able to access it. The way that the species as an *intentio* is in the subject is not in an ordinary way of inhering. Just as light does not move or change air though the light is totally in the air, the *intentio* resides in the bodily organ, being in the organ but not of it. Thus, the phantasm as a species exists in the bodily organ according to intentional existence. *Intentio* for Scotus means to exist as a representation or likeness (*similitudo*) that tends toward its object. In a certain way its function is to signify its object. To have intentional existence does not mean, for Scotus, to be a mental entity, but a kind of entity that represents another. This claim is not unique to Scotus, certainly, as we saw, Aquinas understands that the species exists according to intentional existence. What I argue is unique to Scotus is how his understanding of intentional existence depends upon a certain cognitive attention on the part of the cognitive faculty. To explain what this means and its full significance, it must be understood in terms of the discussion in this dissertation.

In Chapter One, I showed how Aristotle understands the relationship of the body and soul as highly specific. In the first book of *De Anima*, Aristotle admonishes his predecessors who do not concern themselves with the characteristics of the body, and especially those who think that any soul could be clothed by any body. Thus, we saw that Aristotle gives careful concern to the nature of the body, to the structure of the sense organ, and to the processes of the body-soul composite. What emerged from this discussion is the deep and complex understanding of unity that underlies Aristotle's understanding of the cognitive processes.

In Chapter Two, I discussed how the beatific object and the beatific vision inform and guide Scotus' cognitive project. Of critical importance is the fact that the intellect is intrinsically able to cognize the divine essence as it is present and existing in itself. The divine essence cannot be represented by a sense image and must be present to the intellect in its own existence. As this is the highest cognitive experience, it is defining of all cognitive experience. The presence of the object to the cognitive faculty in its own existence is of central importance in Scotus' cognitive project. Moreover, the cognitive faculties are intrinsically capable of noticing the existence of the object as the object actually exists. By way of the discussion on the incarnation, it was shown that the world, and therefore, the object are worthy of being loved as the world is sacralized. Thus, the material object is endowed with an intrinsic dignity that makes it a worthy object of cognitive attention in itself.

In Chapter Three, I discussed how Scotus understands the soul and body relationship. What emerged from this discussion is Scotus' complicated and hierarchical understanding of unity, following Aristotle. The unified whole being has characteristics

unique to itself that neither of its components has separately. In the discussion of Scotus' understanding of *per se* being, we saw that he considers an accident a *per se* being when it is considered apart from its subject. The accident is not necessarily synonymous with inherence and is something in its own right. The highest *per se* being is the *suppositum* and Scotus understands the *suppositum* that has an intellectual nature as a person. The notion of person is what finally secures the unity of the human being. What underlies the unity of the human being is substantial unity of form and matter, but it is the cognitive awareness that guarantees the unity of the person. It was also shown that the immateriality of the intellective part of the soul does not preclude it from communicating actuality to the body. Given the formal distinction between the faculties of the soul, that Scotus embraces a plurality of forms does not threaten the unity of the person.

In Chapter Four, I discussed Aquinas' account of sensation and in particular the nature of the spiritual change and intentional existence. Aquinas argues that sensation requires a spiritual change by which the sensible form comes to exist in the sense organ, a composite of body and soul, according to intentional existence. As we saw, there is a debate concerning whether sensation, according to Aquinas, is a corporeal change, distinct from a natural change, or whether it is a spiritual, that is, incorporeal, change that happens as a corporeal event. Moreover, we saw that since Aquinas maintains that sensation is primarily passive, though he contends that cognition involves a tending toward the object, such that *intentio* is identified with *conversio*, it is difficult for him to account for cognitive attention. In the discussion of Scotus' account of sensation we saw that in an early work, his *QDA*, he embraces Aquinas' distinction between natural change and spiritual change, understanding that sensation requires the spiritual change where the

sensible form is received according to intentional existence. It also became clear that the way that Scotus characterizes the unity of the sense organ through the notion of the form of the whole allows him to reshape the sense organ's receptivity activity. It does not merely receive the sensible species but is actively tending towards it as it has an intrinsic operation. Again, while the notions of immanent and transient operations are not unique to Scotus, his treatment of them, especially in regards to cognition, gives the cognitive faculties an activity of their own, beyond receiving.

For Scotus, the sensible species is an accident and is able to inhere or to exist in its subject in a non-ordinary way. The example of *lux* and *lumen* were offered in support of this claim and also to show how the species can exist in the sensible organ. Sensation for Scotus does seem to involve a complicated physiological process in which the species comes to be present in the sense organ, having the ontological status of an accident, and in which the sense organ is at the same time tending toward the external object. That Scotus depicts sensation as intuitive cognition gives the sense the intrinsic capacity to "notice" the existence of the external object. Sensation requires the presence of the external object. For Aristotle and Aquinas the presence of the object is required in order to move the sense which is basically passive the reception of the sensible form. The characterization of sensation as intuitive cognition allows Scotus to make the existence of the object that which the sense notices. Thus, sensation for Scotus is an active tending toward the object. The sensible species leads the sense to apprehend the object, but the sense has the intrinsic capacity to notice the object as it is present.

In a passage in the *Quodlibetal Questions*, Scotus explains how he understands the activity of the agent intellect with the phantasm:

From the phantasm or sensible image in the imagination there would be produced in the intellect by virtue of the agent intellect an intelligible species, or something in which a thing appears as actually intelligible and which can be called, for brevity's sake, an intelligible species. And this very real production of one representation from another is accompanied by a metaphorical "transformation" of one object into another, namely, of something sensibly imaginable into something intelligible. And this metaphorical description is a reasonable account of what goes on, because the object has a similar sort of existence as object in the one representation as it does in the other. Therefore, in the real change whereby a spiritual representation is produced with the help of a corporeal representation, namely, where a universal representation is produced with the help of a singular representation, one can speak or think of a similar "transformation" of a corporeal object into spiritual one, or of a singular object into a universal one.⁶⁸⁴

It is clear in this passage that the phantasm is a corporeal representation. As a representation the phantasm has the nature of an intentio. That it is corporeal means that it exists in the bodily organ and under the material condition of singularity. It is not a mental entity, but as that which is able to exist in a bodily organ, in the way that lumen exists in air, it is itself not material, thus it is something that the intellect can act with. What is interesting in this passage is that Scotus considers the real change involved in the activity of the agent intellect with the phantasm to be a change from a corporeal representation to a spiritual representation. The work of sensation is to ultimately make an object present to the intellect. Such a presence can only be achieved by way of a species or an intentio. The totality of the object is in the intentio. What this means is that the object is an object because the cognitive faculty actively tends toward it by way of the species.

⁶⁸⁴ *Quodl.*, 15, 15.51 [16]: “. . .quod virtute in intellectus agentis de phantasmae in phantasia gignitur species intelligibilis in intellectus, vel aliqua ratio, in qua actus relucet intelligibile, quae breviter loquedo, dicatur species intelligibilis: et ista gignitionem reale repraesentatus de repraesentativo dicitur concomitari quaedam gignitio metaphorica obiecti de obiecto, se intelligibilis de imaginabilis quod ideo rationabiliter dicitur, quia tale esse obiectivum habet obiectum in repraesensari; quale habet repraesentativum correspondens; et ideo translatione reali facta in repraesentativo, quando de corporali gignitur spirituale, scilicet de repraesentativo singulari gignitur repraesentativum universale, consimilis dicitur, vel intelligitur translatio in obiectis de corporali ad spirituale, vel de singulari ad universale.”

The consideration of the question on the nature of the phantasm not only reveals the phantasm as having the nature of an *intentio* and therefore accessible by the agent intellect, but and perhaps more importantly and interestingly, reveals how Scotus is able to account for cognitive attention and how the sense is able to notice the object in its own existence. The fundamental activity of cognition for Scotus is attending to an object that is present to it. Scotus' understanding of Aristotle, which I contend is deeper, in ways, than even Aristotle wrote about, enables him to present a cohesive account of sensation beyond the way in which it was traditionally understood and which still is of interest today. There are several points that I would like to make in regards to the relevancy of Scotus scholarship.

First, questions still remain about the exact nature of the process by which the agent intellect acts with the phantasm to produce the intelligible species. And this is a question worth considering, though it remained outside of the scope of this work. Given the way that Scotus understands substantial unity, and especially the notion of person, it appears that he would be able to show how the phantasm could be understood as that which mediates between sensation and intellection, and thus this question is worth investigating further.

Second, the problem of how the intellect and the body work together in cognition is not Descartes' mind-body problem for either Aristotle or Scotus. Both insist upon a unity of the soul and the body that underlies their cognitive projects. It is in this way that I think that Scotus' project remains relevant today, if simply for the fact that in order to understand his concerns in terms of cognition, we must set aside the separation of the mind from the body that underlies Descartes' cognitive approach. In doing so we come

to understand how our own language, for example, the word 'physical' might not serve us any better than it does the medieval context.

Third, the additional work that I would like to pursue based on my work here concerns the object itself. Two things have intrigued me in regards to the object. First, that the object is worthy of cognitive attention itself and second that we apprehend the object as it is present and actually existing. Both of these claims seem to be significant in terms of both phenomenology and modern science. Scotus claims that the object is a co-cause with the intellect in the process of intellection such that the object accounts for the specific character of that intellection. We are not simply knowing the form of the object, but know the object as it actually exists, and of course, this is made possible because of sensation as intuitive cognition. Given the inherent dignity of the object and that it is intrinsically intelligible coupled again with the fact that the cognitive faculties are intrinsically able to notice the presence of the object seems to be a claim that the object is worthy of study in itself. The beauty of Scotus' thought is that it directs us to the world by way of his understanding of the highest cognitive experience.

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