Rethinking Intuitive Cognition: Duns Scotus and the Possibility of the Autonomy of Human Thought

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Abstract

This study will examine the ontological dependency between the thinking act of the intellect and the intelligibility of the objects of thought. Whereas the intellectual tradition prior to Duns Scotus grounds the formation of the objects of thought and our ability to understand them with certainty in different forms of participation in the divine intellect, Scotus shows that the intelligibility of the objects of thought is internal to them alone and is not dependent on participation.

Duns Scotus's analysis of the relation between the intelligibility of the objects of thought and God is part of a longstanding tradition, from Augustine to the central theologians of the High Middle Ages, e.g., Anselm, Aquinas, Bonaventure and Henry of Ghent. For a long time, it was accepted that the intelligibility of things, whether in reality or in the mind, is dependent on God. Accepting this as a *conditio sine qua non*, the main debate involves different doctrines explaining how this dependency takes place, e.g., whether by *Divine Illumination* or by *Participation*.[1] By refuting this dependency, Scotus made both explanations redundant and thus was able to present, for the first time, a solid metaphysical system that disconnects the intelligibility of thought and God.

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[1] For further reading on the development of the doctrine of *Divine Illumination* see Schumacher, Marrone 2001, on the doctrine of *Participation* see te Velde 1995, Fabro and Ferraro 1950, Geiger 1942.

Introduction

Scotus's theory of logical possibility[2] holds that "the possibles are not caused by God, but rather originate in the formal content of the possibles itself." (Hoffmann 2009, 379)[3] This is one of Scotus's most important contributions to modernity and paves the way to a new understanding of that which grounds intelligibility. Yet this theory, as with many others proposed by Scotus, focuses on the divine realm, and leaves unanswered the question of whether in fact, and in what manner, its conclusions apply to human thinking and acting. The aim of this paper is to present an account of the possibility of the human mind operating according to the same model - qualified by its finite nature - that Scotus developed to explicate the divine mind. In other words, the paper shows how the mechanism of human thought, like divine thought, constitutes within itself an autonomy which is isolated, at least in the formal sense, from any causation and is ruled solely by the principle of non-contradiction. This is undertaken in two parts. In the first, it is demonstrated that the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition stands at the core of Scotus's synthesis between the Aristotelian and Augustinian models of understanding. In the second part, the relation between intuition and the principle of non-contradiction is examined, and it is argued that they are really one, though formally distinct.[4]

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[2] See dd. 35-36, 38, 39, 43 in *Lect. I*, *Ord. I* and *Rep. I-A*.

[3] This view can be found, for example, in *Rep*. 1.2.23 (2:527) where Scotus examines that which grounds the impossible, and thus the possible: "Indeed, any conceivable positive can exist. For this reason, nothing is simply impossible, except that which implies a contradiction. … For this reason, because impossibles are of themselves contradictory and formally repugnant, it makes no sense, in the case of something impossible or including a contradiction, to seek its cause in God on account of some negation or negative aspect in him. In fact, [the cause must be sought] in the impossible itself and of itself, on account of its formal impossibility and repugnance between its parts. Therefore, impossibility in creatures does not originate from impossibility in God, but only from within itself and from the mutual incompatibility and repugnance between its parts."

[4] For brief summary of the formal distinction see Cross 1999, 149. See also Wolter 1990a.

It is important to note that the primary object of this paper is not an account of Scotus's philosophy for its own sake, but rather to show how Scotus's thought can be applied to ground the autonomy of human thought. Consequently, unorthodox readings and deliberate alterations are made throughout the text. As Gilles Deleuze has noted: "There is a great difference between writing history of philosophy and writing philosophy. In the one case, we study the arrows or the tools of a great thinker, the trophies and the prey, the continents discovered. In the other case, we trim our own arrows, or gather those which seem to us the finest in order to try to send them in other directions." (Deleuze, xv) Thus it is not the author's intention to claim that Scotus presented a clear doctrine regarding the autonomy of human thought, but rather to show how the structural and conceptual shifts expose the very possibility of such an autonomy which under previous frameworks was not possible.[5] As such, the primary contribution of this paper lies in juxtaposing previous Scotus scholarship in an attempt to answer the key question: how is the autonomy of human thought made possible? This "*Meta*" discussion of Scotus's doctrines also dictates our approach to Scotus's texts and to the secondary literature. The paper relies on well-known interpretations of Scotus's doctrines, and its main contribution lies in extending the scope of such interpretations to facilitate their juxtaposition. In the interest of making the discussion accessible to the reader, quoted material is given in translation.[6]

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[5] This does not mean that contributions by previous thinkers are of no significance. For example, Henry of Ghent claims that impossibility or logical contradiction does not ontologically depend on the divine essence because we can consider this independently of God's power or essence. See Henry of Ghent, *Quodlbet* 4.31.

[6] Relevant translations are mentioned in the primary sources. In the quotations, the left side of the parentheses refers to the Latin and the right to the translated text.

Part I

Through an examination of Scotus's doctrine of intuitive cognition under a new and extended interpretation, it will be shown that the human mind, with respect to what it can or cannot think, is conditioned just like God's and thus can think potentially, within the limitations of its finite nature, of anything the latter can. Firstly, the notion of intuitive cognition is briefly examined, specifically its relation to contingency and memory.[7] Then, the notion of intuitive cognition is further amplified and examined in relation to the Augustinian triad of *memory, intelligence* and *will*. This extended treatment of intuitive cognition will be implemented to explain the autonomy of the principle of non-contradiction within human thought.

Exposition of Intuitive Cognition

a. **General Outline**

As the development of Scotus's conception of intuitive cognition is presented in other studies,[8] the discussion of intuitive cognition will be limited to the understanding he attained in his mature period.[9] This account of Scotus's is developed in the context of his attempt to explain how angels can have distinct knowledge of God without recourse to beatific vision.[10] Scotus maintains that angels cannot have naturally intuitive knowledge of God, since that would the entail the beatific vision exclusive to God, while, on the other hand, they are not limited to a confused and imperfect knowledge of God's nature (for that is the kind of knowledge humans possess in this lifetime[11]).

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[7] Wolter 1990b, 98-122.
[8] See e.g. Dumont 1989.
[9] For further reading on Scotus's distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition see, among other, Cross 2014, Day 1947.
[10] Dumont 1989, 584, footnote 23.
[11] *Ord.* 1.3.1.1-2.56-58 [3:38-40].

He thus concludes that the angels possess some sort of distinct kind of cognition of God's nature which is not intuitive.[12] Thus Scotus distinguishes between two types of cognition:

> [I]t is helpful to distinguish two acts of the intellect at the level of simple apprehension or intellection of a simple object. One 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 called "abstractive" because it "abstracts" the object from existence or non-existence, from presence or absence. But there is another act of understanding, though we do not experience it in ourselves as certainly, but it is possible. It is knowledge precisely of a present object as present and of an existing object as existing. (*Quodl*. 6.18-19 [7-8], 135-36)

Scotus thus distinguished two types of cognition:

1. Abstractive, by which a thing is understood by means of an abstraction from existence.
2. Intuitive, by which the intellect cognizes "a thing insofar as it is present in its own existence."[13]

The first to cast doubt on whether humans are capable of experiencing intellectual intuitive cognition in this lifetime or in the next was Scotus himself.[14] To allay this doubt, Scotus

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[12] "They can have a distinct knowledge of God, although it is not intuitive but abstractive." *Lect.* 2.3.3.1.291-92 (16:341-42)

[13] "[I]n the intellect there can be of two kinds of cognition and understanding, in one case, understanding can be in the intellect in so far as it abstracts from all existence, in the other case, understanding can be of the thing according to that which is present in its own existence." Ibid, n. 285 (16:338-9)

[14] "As for the first grade, namely [intellective] intuitive cognition, whether it is in the intellect in this life, there is a doubt." *Quaest Metaphys*. 2.3.111 [23] (3:231, 1998); Also: "But there is another act of understanding [i.e. intellective intuitive cognition], though we do not experience it in ourselves as certainly, but it is possible. It is knowledge

immediately writes that "it seems that there is" such an experience of intuitive cognition in this life.[15] However, his following argumentation, which is based upon the Franciscan maxim that the perfection of the inferior faculty of sense must reside in the superior faculty of intellect, does not appear very convincing.[16] A stronger argument appears in the second book of the *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, though it does not speak of intuitive cognition explicitly (yet leaves little room for doubt). Here Scotus expresses what he probably thought about the manner intuitive cognition is present to the wayfarer: "If, however, one held that the intellect could be known intuitively here, one could say that every distinct act of the sense is accompanied by an act of the intellect about the same object; and this intellection is vision." (*Quaest Metaphys*. 2.3.114 [24] (3:232, 198-99)[17] Scotus's intuitive cognition is however a rather meager type of intuitive cognition. In Wolter's words: "we have no intuitive intellection of material substances as such" nor any "separate or purely spiritual substances," and all knowledge we hold of such things is attained by description.[18] It thus becomes necessary to inquire of what we do indeed hold intellectual intuition.

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precisely of a present object as present and of an existing object as existing." Despite these doubts, Scotus immediately maintains that we do have sensual intuitive cognition: "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. Therefore this perfection also pertains to an intellective power in the act of knowing. It could not pertain to it however unless it could know an existing thing and know it as present either in its own existence or in some intelligible object that contains the thing in question in an eminent way, which we are not concerned with at present." *Quodl.* 6.19 [8], 136. Richard Cross also brings evidence from the *Ordinatio* to support this possibility of intellectual intuitive cognition in this lifetime: "The intellect not only cognizes universals (which is true of abstractive intellection, about which the Philosopher speaks, because that alone is scientific), but also intuitively cognizes those things which the sense cognizes (because the more perfect and higher cognitive power in the same thing cognizes those things which the lower power does), and also cognizes sensations: and each of these is proved by this, that it knows contingently true propositions, and syllogizes from them; but forming propositions and syllogizing is proper to the intellect; the truth of those things is about the objects as intuitively cognized, namely, as existent—the same way in which they are known by the sense." Ord. 1.45.3.137. Translation in Cross 2014, 45-46.

[15] The scholarship is not conclusive on the matter. For a summary of the various opinions see Cross 2014, 50-52.

[16] *Quaest Metaphys*. 2.3.112 [23] (3:231-2)

[17] See also Day, 58.

[18] Wolter 1990b, 111.

b. Knowing the Contingent

In his treatise on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Scotus explains that singularity pertains to both abstractive and intuitive cognition. While most thinkers conceive of abstraction as a process which produces a universal from singulars, Scotus maintains that abstractive intellection, which apprehends the quiddity of things, can also be an intellection of singulars, because "the singular of itself is not determined to existence."[19] It follows that the intellection of singulars can be performed by either intuitive cognition under the aspect of existence or by abstractive cognition under the aspect of quiddity.[20] (Noone 2012) One cannot but be somewhat perplexed, however, when Scotus writes immediately afterward that "we must first see how in our present state the singular *per se* is neither understood by our intellect, nor does the sense perceive it. Secondly, we must see how in some way we do understand and sense the singular and how we do not do so." (*Quaest Metaphys.* 7.15.19 [5] (4:300-1), 258) Abstractive cognition supplies us with descriptive knowledge of the thing rather than substantial knowledge: "The intellect, in understanding the universal, abstracts each of them [one at a time], so that it might eventually understand the singular, namely the nature which is [in fact] 'this' but not qua 'this.' But with the accidents proper to this it composes a subject with accidents." This does not result in "a quidditative concept" but "only as it were per accidens … [that is] the more determined concept at which we can arrive in this life." (Ibid., n. 32 [8] (4:306), 262-3))[21] Thus our intellect conceives things "only through the mediacy of something begotten in the sense." (Ibid., n. 26 [6]. (4:303, 260))

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[19] *Quaest Metaphys*. VII, q. 15, 18 [4] (4:299-300, 258). On the cognizing the singular abstractly see South.
[20] Noone 2012, 217-18.
[21] On descriptive knowledge see Pini 2009.

According to Aquinas, whereas man understands through the imperfect species that he abstracts through the senses, the angels possess innate and perfect species granted to them directly by God.[22] Scotus criticizes this model through an examination of the manner in which Christ understands. On the one hand, argues Scotus, Christ is more perfect than the angels, while on the other hand he possesses, due to his human nature, an active intellect. The main problem, which can be seen as a major criticism of Aquinas' theory of angelic intellection (and subsequently can be used to criticize the species theory altogether[23]), can be briefly stated as follows: intelligible species, whether abstracted or infused, are likenesses which do not represent things in their existence and thus cannot be used in order to derive contingent knowledge of things, i.e. whether they exist or not.[24] And so in order to handle such "contingent truths knowable by intuitive cognition (i.e., contingent truths about existents insofar as they are existing) and in order to know existents actually in themselves, it is necessary to have the objects themselves present so that they could be intuitively known and intuitively seen in themselves." (Wolter 1990b, 116) Scotus here concludes that infused species do not suffice in order to know contingent reality and therefore another kind of cognition, namely intuitive, must be responsible for such knowledge. Scotus basically ties together the possibility of the knowledge of contingent things with intuitive cognition.[25] This argument, which holds that knowledge of "existing things qua existing, viz.

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[22] See e.g. Aquinas' *QDV* 1.4, *ST* 1.57.1. On Aquinas's treatment of human and angelic cognition see Gordon 2016 and Gordon 2015,

[23] As can be seen in Auriol and Ockham, intuitive cognition had a significant impact on the doctrine of intelligible species. For further reading see Wood, Tachau, 104-29, Wengert, Stump, Pasnau and Spruit, 291-98.

[24] "And if it is said that it could have knowledge of all existing for all different time through infused species, -this is false, since infused species represent the object as abstracted from actual existence (because they represent in the same way whether the object exists or does not exist, and consequently, are not the ground for knowing (*ratio cognoscendi*) existents as existing)." *Ord.* 3.14.3.113 (9:468) Timothy Noone traces this criticism and the need for a special kind of intuition to Bonaventure. See Noone 2011 and Noone 2012, 216-17, 219-220.

[25] Quoting Scotus, Cross points out the fact that even the phantasm does not suffice to indicate that something is present or not: "the phantasm alone is not sufficient for intuitive cognition of the object, because the phantasm represents the thing whether existent or not, or present or not, and consequently through it [viz. the phantasm] there

contingent truths, could not be known through any sort of innate species [or infused species]", has important implications not only regarding Christ, who must possess intuitive cognition, nor to criticize Aquinas' conception of angelic cognition - but also regarding human cognition.

c. Imperfect Intuitive Cognition

Turning his focus toward the human mind, Scotus now develops the notion of imperfect intuitive cognition to explain memories of the past and opinions regarding the future. In *Ordinatio* IV, d. 45, q. 3, Scotus asks "whether the separated soul is able to remember past events which occurred when it was conjoined to the body". Scotus explains that: 1. Remembering acts regard to that which is remembered to have passed, otherwise it would not be of the past. 2. The memory records the lapse between the presence of the thing in the past and the current act of memory which presents itself at present. 3. The remembered object is not present in itself, for otherwise it would be present as present and not as past. 4. Since that which is remembered cannot be presented in itself, a likeness or species is required in order for something to be presented as past.[26]

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cannot be had cognition of the thing as existent' as present in its proper existence. But this cognition, which is called intuitive, can be intellective, otherwise the intellect would not be certain of the existence of any object." *Ord.* 4.45.2.65 (14:157-58). To that Cross adds that "the kinds of species that Scotus wants to reject in the intuitive cognition of extramental material objects (given that he believes it to be possible) are merely those that are not required for perceptual cognition: namely, phantasms and intelligible species. As far as I can see, he shows no sign of wanting to eliminate sensible species—and certainly no sign of wanting to eliminate sensory acts". Comment and translation from Cross 2014, 47, 49.

[26] "Assuming as certain there could be in us an act whereby the past is known as an object … which we call "remembering," is not immediately about any past event, but only about some act of the person or subject remembering. … For I only remember that you sat here because I recall I have seen or have known you to be sitting here. On the other hand, though I know I was born, or that the world was created, I have no remembrance of this or that event, for I recall no act of mine in the past that had this or that as its object. Remembering is cognition of some past act of the person remembering where the act is recognized as being past." *Ord.* 4.45.3.87-88 (165-66, 213-14)

Against those who claim that the intelligible species and the phantasms in the imagination suffice for remembering the past without recourse to intuition,[27] Scotus argues that it is not only the past event or the thing which was imprinted on the intellect that is remembered, but that there are rather two objects of memory. The act of remembrance does not relate directly to a specific past event but is rather an act of "the remembering subject" because a thing or object of remembrance can be remembered only if the subject remembers himself to witness such a thing. Consequently, events that the subject does not remember himself witnessing cannot be remembered, e.g. being born. Remembering, he summarizes, is "cognition of some past act of the person remembering where the act is recognized as being past." Thus, in addition to the typical accidental object that we remember as "such and such", Scotus adds a necessary object which accompanies all memories – for all memories carry with them the memory of the self as perceiving those memories as present. Scotus distinguishes between the two objects of remembrance: a remote object, which is the event remembered, and a proximate object – i.e. "the past human act whereby he reached out to that other object." (*Ord.* 4.45.3.94 (14:167, 215)) Any object, sensual or not (i.e., including objects of will or intellection) can be remembered if it meets these conditions. For this reason, Scotus explains that all the accidental objects of the memory are conditioned and mediated by the memorized self, which is grasped immediately, i.e. intuitively.

Extending the Application of Intuitive Cognition

Sebastian Day, after stating that the task of the historian of philosophy "is not to construct but to re-construct to re-present as faithfully as possible the mind of the author he is expounding,"

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[27] *Ord.* 3.14.3.116 (9:469-70).

explains that Scotus falls among the kind of writers whose work remained incomplete, whose chronology is not completely known and whose work contains contradictions, "apparent or real".[28] While the aim of the first section has been to introduce the notion of intuitive cognition, the present section extends, in a speculative manner, what we have learned of intuitive cognition. In so doing the study clearly departs from the traditional role of the history of philosophy.

The previous discussion regarding the conditions of remembering, which was concerned with imperfect intuitive cognition, explicates a fundamental condition of thinking, remembering and volition. Just as remembering a past event presupposes the act of seeing the remembered, so conceiving what is present presupposes a perceiver who perceives that which is conceived. Any mental event is therefore based upon both perception of what is conceived abstractly and intuitive cognition of the act of conceiving.

Whereas abstractive knowledge is apprehended according to its terms and is indifferent to temporality altogether, intuitive knowledge is knowledge of the contingent which cannot be deduced from the terms themselves. Intuitive cognition is thus the *conditio sine qua non* or the transcendental condition for grasping the contingent as such. As discussed above, Scotus explains that in distinction to knowledge of the past witnessed by the knower, one knows he was born although he does not recall the event. The *truth* of such events cannot be known *a posteriori,* yet neither can it reside within us simply, for in that case we would be able to perceive it within us, and the event would be temporally conditioned. This kind of knowledge of the past requires a different kind of "remembering". Such remembrance may be called *transcendental remembering*,

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[28] See Day, 44-45.

i.e., an act that makes it possible for us to "remember" truths of the past which we never witnessed but which are known transcendentally when one intuits his own existence.

Scotus's argument that it is necessary for Christ to have intuitive cognition if he is to know contingent reality nevertheless blurs an important and apparently obvious premise: that Christ is able to know all necessary truths without intuitive cognition. But perhaps this premise is not obvious at all and intuitive cognition is required to know necessary truths as well?

As we have seen above, the act of remembering consists of a proximate object, the self, and the remote object, the remembered thing or event. It is clear that when 2+2=4 or a chair "as such" is conceived, each is conceived in an abstract manner, which is temporally indifferent. In this respect there is no sense of talking about remembering them as knowledge of the past, for remembering requires one to remember seeing or storing them. And yet, necessary truths can be understood as known or "remembered" as is existential knowledge of past events insofar as they are remembered through that which conditions them. However, while the latter kind concerns truths that are derived transcendentally from our existence as limited and contingent beings, necessary truths are not derived from our existence but rather from "the formal content (*ratio formalis*) of the terms",[29] that are brought to light by the act of thought itself.[30] But, though such formal content "is the necessary cause of the truth", the remembrance of such a truth requires an internal act that perceives it as such, i.e., an intuitive cognition of the self that perceives (not determines) 2+2 to be 4.[31] Thus, any *intellection* of a necessary truth is conditioned by a

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[29] Ord. 1.3.1.4.234 (3:140-01, 124)

[30] This corresponds to Plato's theory of remembering as appears in his dialogue *Meno* without presupposing really existing ideas.

[31] In Ord. 4.43.2.72-89 (14:22-24), Scotus discusses the internal perception by which we experience all that is perceived. I think that the proximate/remote object model provides a solution to the difficulty expressed by Cross with regard to "why Scotus holds that the reflex act is receptive' of the direct act". Though Cross shows how Scotus accepted the view of having an immediate intuition of the self, a view that he denied in his early writings, he does not

transcendental remembering, existential or formal, which presupposes the perception of such remembering. It follows then that intuitive cognition accompanies any accidental object of our thought, whether necessary or contingent.

The conclusion that the intellection of both necessary and contingent knowledge is conditioned by intuitive cognition, although not stated anywhere explicitly, finds support, though only indirectly and by way of resemblance, in Scotus's refutation of the doctrine of *divine illumination* in *Ordinatio* I, d. 3. There, Scotus says that "[c]oncerning the third kind of knowable things—namely, our own acts—I say this: for many of them there is certainty, just as for first principles that are known per se". (*Ord.* 1.3.1.4.238 (3:144, 126)) Regarding self-evident principles, he explains that "when the intellect combines these terms, it has, as soon as it apprehends them, within itself the necessary cause for the agreement *(conformitatis)* between the act of combining and the very terms that are combined". (Ibid., n. 230 (3:139, 122)) Leaving aside the fact that the truth of such propositions is indifferent to their being known by an intellect and is determined solely by the formal content of the terms involved,[32] it is striking to notice that the cognition of such truths is structurally similar to Scotus's account of how the remembered includes and is conditioned by the perception of the self who remembers: "Hence, it is not possible to have a composition of such terms that is not true. So, too, it is impossible to apprehend *(perceptio)* the composition and to apprehend the terms without also apprehending the agreement between the composition and the terms and apprehending the truth, because the things that were apprehended to begin with evidently include the apprehension of that truth." (Ibid.) If we maintain that the relation between the remembered event and he who remembers applies as well to the relation between abstractive

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explain the relation between the intuition of the self and the things that are reflected. I believe that South's analysis of the way we recall things better captures this point. See Cross 2014, pp. 53-57, South 2002, 139-141.

[32] See *Ord.* 1.2.1.1-2.15, 22, 28 (2:131, 136, 140), *Ord.* 1.3.1.4.268-9 (3:163-65)

cognition and he who perceives such abstract truths, the following claim of Scotus can be raised as an objection: "if one assumes that 'the species in the intellect is not the cause of the presence of the object,' I say that this proposition is false with respect to [the second kind of] presence, which shows something as to be known, at least in abstractive intellection." (*Ord.* 1.3.3.1.382 (3:233, 189)) However, this claim is made precisely after Scotus explains that the agent intellect and the phantasms are two partial causes in the production of the intelligible species. Thus, the claim that no intuitive cognition is involved in grasping abstract truth holds only in regard to the *ratio* of cognizability, which is formal. This does not, however, contradict the claim that intuitive cognition of the self accompanies the grasping of that which is perceived.[33]

Furthermore, as we have seen above, Scotus equates the infallibility of the knowledge we possess of our own acts with the knowledge we have of self-evident propositions. Knowledge of our own acts includes unique kinds of knowledge such as understanding, hearing etc. What is unique about such acts is that though one might be doubtful whether one understands or hears correctly, one cannot doubt thinking or hearing something: "Although there is no certainty that I see something white out there or in a certain subject or at a certain distance (for an illusion can occur, in the medium or in the organ, and in many other ways), there is still certainty that I see, even if the organ is subject to an illusion". (*Ord.* 1.3.1.4.239 (3:145, 126)) It is clear that the kind of knowledge we grasp while thinking, hearing, being awake, is very similar to intuitive cognition which accompanies the perception of other kinds of knowledge. Whether what we think about is of necessity (as in self-evident principles and conclusions) or contingent (of which we might be

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[33] Day, comparing abstractive and intuitive cognition, concludes that "[c]ognition pertaining to a definition stops short of that intuitive cognition of an object about which a universal definition is made. Therefore our previous statement stands: intuitive cognition is not possible in the conceptual order." However, the analysis carried out above is not of the "definition" but rather of that which accompanies the perception of the definition. Day, 61-66.

doubtful), it is grasped only in a secondary manner while the perceiving act is grasped immediately. Moreover, Scotus's statement, the degree of certainty regarding our own acts is as we hold of self-evident propositions, reveals that when intuitive cognition conditions the grasp of contingent things, it constitutes their perceptibility insofar as they are present, whereas when intuitive cognition conditions self-evident propositions, it grounds the "apprehension [of] the agreement between the composition and the terms and apprehending the truth" (Ibid., n. 230 (3:139, 122)) and therefore of our ability to perceive the truth.

The Memory

It seems that any act of thinking, whether of temporal or eternal things, requires some sort of remembering. Let us consider Scotus's understanding of memory.[34] In fact, part three of the third distinction, the *imago*, which deals explicitly with the manner in which abstraction and intellection occur, opens with the question of whether the intellect possess a memory which is prior to the act of intellection.[35] Scotus explains three ways to understand the memory:

> Memory… can be taken in three ways: in one way as conserving the species of the past things as past. … In another way as conserving the species representing the objects in themselves, whether they really exist or not. … A third way is insofar as [the memory] has some principle whereby it elicits actual knowledge, which, however, does not stay there without a second act. (*Rep.* 1.3.4.109 (1:215))[36]

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[34] Scotus' treatment of memory can be found in Boulnois 189-203, Pizzo 158-267, Sondag 7-108, Coleman 465-99, Wolter and Adams 176-92.

[35] *Ord.* 1.3.3.1.333 (3:201)

[36] Identical to *Ord.* 1.3 Appendice A, (3:364-65).

Each of these three ways of understanding memory are consistent with the view that abstractive and intuitive cognition accompany the act of recollection. While the first type of memory conserves past events as past, i.e. as memories in the normal sense, the second conserves not the events themselves but rather the species as standing alone and independent.[37] It is important to note that these two types of memory are about conserving, either by means of an abstraction which is indifferent to existence, or by "conserving the species of the past things as past." Intuitive cognition comes into act only when the third type of memory recollects the past or reflects on the species abstractly. Thus, both contingent temporal knowledge, which is stored under the first type of memory, and necessary atemporal knowledge, which is stored under the second type of memory, require intuitive cognition in ordered to be recalled. These conserving memories are then not really distinct but only formally so, and always depend on the third type of memory which is based upon intuitive cognition to make the actual recollection. For this reason, Scotus calls a potential act of memory, which addresses specific types of memories, an *imperfect* memory, whereas a perfect act is an actual act of memory which entails both the recollection and storing acts[38] (a similar account is applied to intelligence and will,[39] which should be understood, as Boulnois explains, as transcendental perfections[40] of one soul[41] and not as separated powers).

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[37] Cross contends that the "power to call to mind abstract mental contents", that belongs to abstractive cognition, is distinct from a "recollection of past events that we ourselves perceived". I think he is right in the sense that the former falls under abstractive cognition, however I think that by not emphasizing its relation to the memory, he misses the point that asserts that, by recalling an intelligible species to mind, it is perceived under the proximate/remote model that is applied to all objects of recollection. See Cross 2014, 60-61.

[38] See *Ord.* 1.2.2.3.221 (2:259).

[39] Coleman, 476.

[40] "Au sens propre, il faudra donc parler de la mémoire, de l'intelligence et de la volonté, non-pas comme de puissances distinctes, mais comme de perfections transcendantales" Boulnois, 199; Also *Rep.* 1.35.1.34 (2:360), *Ord.* 1.27.51 (4:85).

[41] Boulnois, 202.

The third type of memory is responsible for intellection, i.e. for eliciting actual knowledge, and must be understood according to its essential and accidental characters. By way of example, Scotus writes that "wood warms per accidens": just as warming is not the wood's essential act but only an accidental one (being wood is the wood's essential act), in a similar way the act of intellection/recollection is the essential act of the intellect/memory, whereas the reception of the particular intellection by the possible intellect is accidental, as with the reception of some warmth which is "productive per accidens". (*Quodl.,*15.61 (362))[42] These dual productions correspond to Scotus's discussion of proximate and remote objects according to which the intellect first intuits itself and through itself remembers the remote object as an event that has taken place. They also correspond to two types of relations within the memory. 1) A mutual relation to the necessary proximate object, which is of the second mode of relation like that 'of generated to generating.' 2) A non-mutual relation to the remote accidental object, which is of the third mode of relation as "declaring to declared". (*Ord.* 1.30.1-2.31 (6:181-2)) Scotus compares these dual relations within the memory to the production of images in a mirror which "would formally be in the mirror, but effectively would produce knowledge in the eye" (*Rep*. 1.32.1-2.29-30 (2:301-2)): as a mirror it embodies a mutual relation of mirror-mirrored, while the knowledge perceived in the mirror is but an accidental knowledge that the mirror reflects.[43]

This dual production presents another important problem: in what sense can intellection be understood as entailing change in the intellect? Scotus maintains that the intellect must remain

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[42] Scotus distinguishes between the essential passive act of the possible intellect whereby it receives the species, and the accidental active act of the possible intellect, the reception of intellection. See Boulnois, 200-01.

[43] "For there memory produces actual knowledge, which has a twofold relation to the memory: namely 'produced to producing', which is of the second mode of relations that is mutual, - and the other 'of declaring to what has been declared', which is of the third mode of relations and which is not mutual. … For if someone produces a mirror and in it images are reflected, although the mirror formally declares those reflections, however that 'producing mirror' efficiently declares them." *Ord*. 1.32.2.23 (6:230-31), my trans.

unchangeable with respect to its first act, while at the same time it can be understood in a secondary sense which allows production and change. In his discussion of divine illumination, Scotus explains that the soul, as changeable, can attain unchangeable knowledge. The changeability of the soul can be taken in two senses: 1. From affirmation to negation and vice versa, e.g. from ignorance to the state of knowledge or from a lack of understanding to understanding. 2. From one contrary to another, e.g. from being right to being wrong. Scotus holds that with respect to necessary propositions, the soul can only be changed in the first way because the terms of such propositions are necessary and evident in themselves and can produce no error but only a necessary conformity of judgment.[44] However, with respect to contingent propositions, he holds that they can be changed according to the second way as well, since their terms do not necessitate conformity of judgment. It follows that one and the same act of memory can be applied to both necessary and contingent propositions under two different modes of syllogistic reasoning, either corresponding to transcendental remembering of the necessary or remembering of the contingent: "for in recollecting, one moves discursively from certain known things to what has in some sense faded away which one wants to recapture in memory". (*Ord.* 4.45.3.122 (14:176, 220)) This act of syllogistic reasoning distinguishes between the primary object, which is grasped immediately, and the accidental object which is syllogized and thus produced through mediation, whether contingently or necessarily.

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[44] "[T]he soul is of itself changeable and subject to error". *Ord.* 1.3.1.4.212 (3:129, 117) "[C]hangeability in the soul can be understood as being of two kinds. One [involves a change] from affirmation to negation and, conversely—for example, from not-knowing to knowing or from not-understanding to understanding. Another is like [a change] from one contrary to another contrary—for example, from being correct to being mistaken or conversely. The soul has the first kind of changeability with respect to any object, and nothing that formally exists in it can remove this kind of changeability. But the soul has the second kind of changeability only with respect to those propositions that are not evident on the basis of their terms". Ibid. n. 250 (3:152, 131)

I. *Synthesizing the Aristotelian and Augustinian Models of Thinking*

The reduction of mental acts into types of memory allows Scotus to synthesize the Augustinian triad of *memory-intelligence-will* together with the Aristotelian conceptual framework of intelligible species and passive and active intellects. As Boulnois explains, the Augustinian and Aristotelian systems focus on different yet complementary aspects of the same thing: "Augustine, on the activity of the soul, Aristotle, on the activity of the object." (Boulnois, 192)[45] This synthesis is not however conclusive and Scotus offers two alternative accounts of the way the species and the active/possible intellect of the Aristotelian framework fit into the Augustinian framework. In the fifteenth question of the *Quodlibet*, Scotus asks: "Is it the agent or the possible intellect that is active in intellection?" According to the first alternative "it would seem to be the agent intellect because the possible intellect receives the intellection." (*Quodl.* 15.49 [13], 355) Scotus follows his distinction between two acts of the intellect.[46] In the first act, the agent intellect abstracts the species from the phantasms, and in the second act, the agent intellect and the species produce an act of intellection.[47] Scotus explains that each of these acts corresponds to "a twofold passive aspect in the possible intellect, corresponding to the twofold activity of the agent intellect." (Ibid., n. 52 [17], 359) The first two types of memory correspond to the act of abstraction by which they receive the species, whether as abstract species wholly indifferent to existence or as "conserving the species of the past things as past." (*Rep.* 1.3.4.109 (1:215)) According to this alternative, the second aspect in the possible intellect corresponds to the reception of the act of intellection and

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[45] Scotus outlines this in *Quodl.* 15.39 [12], 354-55.

[46] Noone maintains that Scotus "makes clear that the role of the agent intellect is not limited to abstracting intelligibles from phantasms, as in the traditional Aristotelian account, but also includes isolating intelligible aspects of things so as to think about those features distinctly." Noone 2012, 215-15, 220-21.

[47] "The agent intellect has two sequentially related actions. The first is to make the potentially intelligible actually intelligible, or the potentially universal, actually universal. The second is to make the potentially understood actually understood." *Quodl.* 15.51 [16], 358.

does not belong to memory but to that which is called by Augustine *intelligence*, i.e. "that by which we understand when we are actually thinking". (*Quodl.* 1.73 [20], 28) Further, according to this alternative, the agent intellect does not pertain to the intellective memory in its first act of abstraction but only in the second act of intellection where the memory, acting under the agent intellect, "make[s] express the actual knowledge of intellection." (*Qoudl.* 15.52 [17], 359)[48] In the second alternative, the possible intellect is responsible for intellection. It follows that the agent intellect has no part in the intellective memory but only in abstraction, and that the possible intellect is responsible for both storing the species and eliciting intellections.[49]

But which of the alternatives really generates intellection? Scotus, quite typically, says that there is no conclusive evidence according to which we could determine which of the two is right. Furthermore, just to complicate things, he adds a third option in which the agent and possible intellects are merely rationally distinct.[50] After openly acknowledging his inability to decide between the alternatives, it is nothing but amazing to find him calmly state the following:

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[48] "One could postulate a twofold passive aspect in the possible intellect corresponding to the twofold activity of the agent intellect. The first… would be the reception of the intelligible species from the phantasm. … the second would be the reception of intellection itself from the intelligible species. ... According to this interpretation both agent and possible intellect would pertain to the intellective memory. The agent intellect, however, would not belong to it in virtue of its first function, which is to make the potentially intelligible actually intelligible. ... It would be in virtue of its second action that the agent intellect would be included in memory, since the function of memory would be to make express the actual knowledge of intellection, and the agent intellect's second action would contribute to this action. The possible intellect, however, would be called memory insofar as its reception of the intelligible species is concerned, whereas it would be called intelligence so far as second receptive role is concerned." Ibid. n. 52 [17], 359.

[49] "[As to the second opinion it follows that] then one would have to say that the agent intellect does not pertain to the memory, but that its action (as regards sensibles) ends at the memory… and this is the form that constitutes perfect memory. … The possible intellect, however, would belong to the memory not only insofar as it retains all the representations of objects actually intelligible, but also insofar as it actively expresses actual knowledge." Ibid. n. 54 [18], 360.

[50]*Quodl*. Ibid. n. 62 [20], 362-63. It seems Scotus was not too bothered by this problem since he mentions it in other places without much concern for which alternative is true: "To perform the second act the intellective part [of the soul] (for the moment I do not care whether this is the agent intellect or the possible intellect) and the intelligible species act as two partial causes". *Ord.*1.3.3.3.563 (3:335, 251) Also *Ord.* 1.2.2.4.314 (2:316).

If… it is claimed that one and the same absolute reality, somehow unlimited, is the immediate principle of different acts, but is called now this potency, now that, with reference to different acts, then the first way seems probable. (Ibid., n. 63 [20], 363)

What is so interesting about this remark is that Scotus's explanation is rooted in something he cannot prove yet believes to be more elegant and simple, namely that the agent and the possible intellects are not really different but only formally so, just as he believes that the *memory, intelligence* and *will* are distinct only formally under one soul.[51]

Regardless which of the alternatives is in fact true,[52] it is crucial to note that Scotus's attempt to fuse Aristotle and Augustine's conceptual frameworks is not isomorphic – in fact, they only partially overlap.[53] Scotus is very well aware of this, and writes with regard to the *intelligence* that only the possible intellect corresponds to it by receiving intellections. Should we be concerned regarding this partial overlap? Not at all. Scotus's aim is not to show that the Augustinian and Aristotelian systems are the same, but rather that they do not contradict each other and are in fact complementary. By doing so, Aristotle's system, which is designed to explain the manner in which man cognizes the sensual world through abstraction, can be extended to treat intellections and volitions as well, whether of sensual or of purely intelligible beings. That is why Scotus states that

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[51] "[T]he soul has in itself some perfection according to which it is first act with respect to the generation of knowledge. It also has in itself some perfection according to which it formally receives generated knowledge, and it has in itself some perfection according to which it formally receives volition. These three perfections are called "memory," "intelligence," and "will" or "soul" insofar as it has them all." *Ord.* 1.3.3.4.580 (3:343, 257)

[52] See also Pizzo, 169.

[53] Both alternatives agree that the possible intellect receives on the one hand the abstracted species and thus belongs to the memory and on the other hand receives the intellections and so belongs to the intelligence as well. See *Quodl.*, 15.60 [20], 362.

the act of recollection does not apply solely to sensual experiences but also to non-sensual intellections such as 2+2=4 and to acts of volition.[54]

II. *Synthesizing the Aristotelian and Augustinian Models of Thinking*

Once we have granted that Aristotle and Augustine's frameworks only partially overlap, it should not surprise us to learn that the agent intellect does not pertain to the intelligence or the will (or the possible intellect to the will). This does not imply a gap within the Aristotelian and Augustinian systems, but rather explicates a substantial difference between the intellect and the will as perfections of the soul.[55] Scotus devotes the last question in *Quastiones Super Libros Metaphysicorum* IX to demonstrating that the will is a rational faculty and that what distinguishes intellect from will is not that the former is rational while the latter is not,[56] but rather their mode of acting. It is important to note, as Wolter has explained, that this particular treatise is not a commentary and should not be taken as an interpretation of Aristotle in the strict sense, but rather as an exposition made by a mature theologian in support of his own claims. Scotus explains that there are two types of active potencies which "stem from the radically different way in which they elicit their respective operations… For either [1] the potency of itself is determined to act, so that so far as itself is concerned, it cannot fail to act when not impeded from without; or [2] it is not of itself so determined, but can perform either this act or its opposite, or can either act or not act at all. A potency of the first sort is commonly called 'nature,' whereas the one of the second sort is

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[54] *Ord* 4.45.3.138 (14:181, 224).

[55] On the intellect and will as perfections see Hoeres.

[56] "But… why does he [Aristotle] so frequently call the intellect a 'rational potency' and not the will…?" *Quaest Metaphys.* 9.15.53 (4:691, 618)

called 'will.'" (*Quaest Metaphys*. 9.15.21-22 (4:680, 608)) Thus, the agent intellect does not pertain to the will insofar as it is an agent but insofar as it acts under the mode of nature.

Cruz Gonzalez-Ayesta outlines Scotus's different usages of the term *nature* and concludes that it cannot be an analogical nor univocal term but must be taken equivocally as: "[a.] the essence of a thing; [b.] the essence insofar as it is the principle for distinguishing movements either according to or contrary to the inclination of some being; [c.] any finite agent; [d.] a kind of active principle as opposed to a free one."[57] (González-Ayesta, 218) Focusing on the last of these, he adds firstly that necessity is not unique to nature since the divine will also acts with necessity; secondly that in nature itself contingency acts in some degree, and finally that nature can act through equivocal agents such as the sun, which can melt snow or dry mud. Thus necessity cannot be considered the essential feature distinguishing nature from will. Scotus explains that the division between agents which act according to nature and those which act according to will is not equivalent to the distinction between those which act necessarily and contingently. Natural chains of events can be contingent, not only for us but also for God, due to impediments in causation resulting from the intervention of other natural agents.[58] What constitutes a natural act is that "when the agent and patient meet in the way appropriate to the potency in question, the one must act and the other be acted upon." (*Quodl.* 16.13 [4], 372) A natural agent, although capable of producing opposite contingent effects, acts necessarily when another thing is in a position to receive its action. While a natural contingent act is necessarily performed when a proximate reception relation is constituted with the thing acted upon, free act can elicit opposites without constraint when there is no impediment between the agent and that which is acted upon.

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[57] See also Hoffmann 1999.
[58] *Quodl.* 16.34 [9], 379.

Scotus not only wishes to demonstrate that the will is a rational power, but relying on Aristotle he equates the distinction between natural and free acts to that of irrational and rational powers, respectively.[59] For while natural contingent acts are dependent on impediments, and so determined through another cause, a free agent "has of itself the ability to elicit contrary actions as regards the same thing." (*Quaest Metaphys.* 9.15.73 (4:698-99, 625)) The intellect as a natural agent is a rational power in a qualified way, for it does not have the power "to both understand and not understand", and "is determined of itself in regard to what it directs" with no deliberation. On the other hand, the will is a rational power absolutely for it wills or nills between opposites only after considering contingents synchronically: "to have opposites in its power is something a rational potency possesses primarily and *per se* as a proper attribute of it *qua* rational. For this is what distinguishes it from an irrational potency." (Ibid., n. 61 (4:691, 619-20)) Although the intellect is not a rational power properly so called, it might nevertheless be considered rational in two qualified senses: It acts under the will's direction[60] and as a precondition for willing (since it wills only through the possibilities presented by the intellect).[61]

But what transforms the will from potency into act? In order to answer this question, Scotus distinguishes between two types of indeterminations of actuality. The first is a passive indeterminacy resulting from some insufficiency, for example "just as a log is in potency to be

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[59] "Each of those which are accompanied by reason is alike capable of contrary effects, but one non-rational power produces one effect; e.g. the hot is capable only of heating, but the medical art can produce both disease and health." Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9.2, 1046b 5-8 (Barnes, 1652) Also: "Non-rational potentialities are all productive of one effect each but the rational produce contrary effects, so that they would produce contrary effects at the same time." 9.5, 1048a 8-10 (1654-1655)

[60] *Quaest Metaphys.* 9.15.36 (4:684, 611)

[61] "[The intellect] not only as regards its own acts is it not rational, but it is not fully rational even as regards the external acts it directs. As a matter of fact, speaking precisely, even as regards its intrinsic acts it is irrational. It is rational only in the qualified sense that it is a precondition for the act of a rational potency." Ibid. n. 38 (4:685, 612) On the relation between the will and the intellect see Ingham.

heated … it becomes actually hot only when it receives heat" The second kind of indetermination is an active indeterminacy which is "based on unlimited actuality" or on the "unlimitedness of its causality and its power", for example the sun is undetermined with respect to the things which are determined by its light. (*Lect.* 1.7.1.26 (16:481-82))[62] This second type of indeterminacy is the indeterminacy which constitutes the freedom of the will to choose between opposite possibilities. It is important to note that this indeterminacy does not explain why the will wills. Scotus himself thinks such an answer is unattainable, since any attempt to explain a contingent choice will entail an infinite regress, i.e. one cannot ground the specific transformation of contingent potency into act.[63] The real question, therefore, is <u>what makes it possible for the will to escape natural necessity and to act as an undetermined potency</u>.

This reveals a second dependency between the will and the intellect. The will not only relies upon possibilities presented by the intellect, but it is the act of the intellect itself which makes it possible for the will to be undetermined. If we follow Scotus's example regarding the undetermined relation between the sun and the lighted objects, we must ask what constitutes such an undetermined relation between the will and its objects. What essentially characterizes the relation between the sun and the objects it lights is that it is a non-mutual relation.[64] The objects are affected while the sun is not. But what grounds the non-mutual relation between the will and the objects it considers? <u>The memory</u>. As we saw earlier, there are two types of relations within the memory – a mutual one, likened to a mirror, and a non-mutual one, which is the accidental object reflected in the mirror. The act by which an object is stored and recollected by the memory

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[62] Also Ibid. nn. 31-34 (4:683-84, 610-11); *Ord.* 1.7.20 (4:114-15). See also Paasch, 137-42.

[63] *Ord.* 1.8.299 (4:325); *Quaest Metaphys.* 9.15.24-5, 29 (4:681-2, 608-610); *Ord.* 2.1.2.91 (7:47-8). See Hoffmann 2002, 190.

[64] More on the distinction between mutual and non-mutual relations see Pini 2011a, 56-58.

constitutes the object in such a way that it holds a non-mutual relation to the intellect, for the memory holds a mutual relation only to its proximate object ("the mirror" which it intuits) and a non-mutual remote relation to the accidental memorized objects, the objects reflected in the mirror. The will, which must will, is in a mutual relation with the memory, from which it receives objects through the act of recollection.[65] The mutuality is expressed by the fact that the will's consideration is stored as a 'memory of consideration by the will'. On the other hand, the objects which the will considers are already constituted in such a way that they are accidental remote non-mutual objects, and so hold no power of determination over the will.[66] The same natural and dual act by which the intellect abstracts and presents the will together with its objects of consideration (as intellected objects) is also a necessary precondition for the possibility of the will considering its objects in such a way that it is not determined to choose one or the other. This indeterminateness is what makes it possible for the intellect to assemble different possible compositions of the objects in "the mirror". The only thing which conditions the possibilities of composition is whether the objects are themselves compossibile, and as will be shown in the following part, this is determined solely in the realm of logic by the principle of non-contradiction, for "nothing is simply impossible, except that which implies a contradiction." (*Rep*. 1.43.1.23, (2:527))[67]

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[65] In *Ord*. 1.3.3 (3:201-357), Scotus analyzes the difference between the process by which the intellect abstracts and stores the intelligible species, and the production of begotten knowledge (see also Ord 1.27.1.42-84 (6:81-98)). Though both processes are co-caused, the first process of the production and conservation of intelligible species, is co-caused by the intellect and the phantasm in a natural way, whereas the production of the begotten knowledge, which is co-caused by the intellect and the intelligible species, is not a natural process, although specified by the intelligible species. To understand the difference between natural and free co-causation, Scotus explains that the reason for understanding is to be found in the understanding itself and not in the causality that caused the act of understanding. (*Ord*. 1.27.55 (6:86)) See also Freidman, 397-407.

[66] See *Ord*. 1.45.9 (6:374). See also Hoffman 2013, 1072-73, 1084-86.

[67] Also *Ord*. 1.7.1.21 (4:115).

Part II

The aim of the second part is to understand the ontological grounding by which Scotus connects the act of thinking to its objects. Since the human mind and the divine mind are similarly limited by the principle of non-contradiction, the focus of discussion turns to the divine realm, aiming to understand the relationship between the two conditions of thinking: the principal of non-contradiction and intuitive cognition. By understanding the relation between God's act of thinking and his objects of thought, it will be shown that objects of thought are not constituted through real participation, as, for example, Henry of Ghent maintained, but rather through quasi-participation. This quasi-participation sheds new light on the relation between intuitive cognition and the principle of non-contradiction, i.e., that they subsist in one and the same thing, though remaining formally distinct.

On that which is Impossible

In the 43rd distinction of the first commentary on the *Sentences*, Scotus asks "whether the primary reason for the impossibility of a thing's being made is on the part of God or the thing to be made?" In other words, whether the existence of something is possible or impossible is dependent on God's will or is dependent upon the nature of the thing itself, i.e., God has no power to determine whether a thing is possible or not. This question has been discussed by many important scholars[68] but in this current discussion we will limit ourselves to Scotus's position which accepts the latter view that argues that "nothing is simply impossible, except that which

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[68] This has been dealt with at length by various scholars, see Mondadori, Hoffmann 2009, Cross 2005, 73-77, Knuuttila, Normore and Boulnois, 439-44.

implies a contradiction." As a result the "impossibility in creatures does not originate from impossibility in God, but only from within itself and from the mutual incompatibility and repugnance between its parts". (Ibid.)[69]

This position does not imply any limits of God's power for the impossible cannot be an object of thinking or willing simply: "something that includes a contradiction is not something that can be conceived as a unity except by an erring intellect, and what is conceived by an erring intellect *qua* erring is nothing." ((Ibid. n. 25 (2:528)) It is therefore impossible that there could be an object that is impossible for God to will, because an impossible cannot be a genuine object of thought, what Scotus calls valid or ratified being, or *ens ratum*, (as opposed to *fictitious being* such as a circled triangle). What cannot be conceived by the intellect, cannot be willed by it. Thus we see that there is a connection between internal contradiction and the possibility of being conceived (*conceptibile*)[70] or imagined (figment)[71] as a unity. The potency to be conceived as a unity is what distinguishes fictitious being from *ens ratum*, for while the latter can really be thought, i.e. is

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[69] "One should not imagine that there is some one thing that is 'the first impossible,' … because in beings no one particular negation or affirmation is 'the first thing that is impossible.' Nay, even the negation of the first being (non-God) is not the 'first impossible,' because it accompanies anything that is not God (indeed, humans are non-Gods, etc.). … Indeed, any conceivable positive can exist. For this reason, nothing is simply impossible, except that which implies a contradiction: for contradictions are contradictory within themselves … e.g., 'irrational human' or 'black whiteness.' For this reason, because impossibles are of themselves contradictory and formally repugnant… [the cause must be sought] in the impossible itself… on account of its formal impossibility and repugnance between its parts." *Rep.* 1.43.1.23 (2: 526-27)

[70] "A fictitious being as distinct from a valid being, for example… an 'irrational human,' [which] includes a contradiction-is not something that can be conceived as a unity except by an erring intellect, and what is conceived by an erring intellect qua erring is nothing. Nor do such figments or contradictories have their prototype ideas in God, except as far as their component parts are concerned [that] do not of themselves constitute a unity, neither really nor conceptually." Ibid. n. 25 (2:528)

[71] "Just as God produces by his own intellect the possible in possible being (esse possibili), so he produces two entities formally (both in possible beings), and these "products" are of themselves formally incompossible, and cannot be one at the same time… But this incompossibilty, which they have, they have formally from themselves. And from their incompossibilty follows the incompatibility of the whole imagined construct (totius figmenti), which includes them, and from this impossibility of the construct in itself and from the incompossibility of its parts comes the incompatibility with respect to any agent." *Ord.* 1.43.16 (6:359-60)

intelligible to the intellect, the former terms are incompossible and repugnant to each other. We may speak of an 'irrational human' but since the terms are repugnant to one another due to a contradiction, we cannot really hold them together in a unity. It is thus impossible for them to be conceived by any intellect, the attempt is simply unintelligible.

This discussion of the impossible, which limits the field of what is logically possible to compossibility and conceivability, emphasizes the question we are pursuing in this part: In what sense are the principle of non-contradiction and intuitive cognition one and the same? Scotus explains that any discussion of impossibility presupposes simple terms which are, in themselves, possible. The in/compossibility between such possible terms is determined formally from themselves (formaliter ex se habent). The only criterion which determines if such terms are conceivable as a union or repugnant to each other is whether they form a contradiction.

The act of uniting terms together in thought (or later willing them into being) is a mental act executed by an agent who acts as the *principator*, i.e. the initiator of such actual unification.[72] The agent as principator transforms terms which do not form a contradiction from being conceivable in potency into conceived in act. It is important to note that the act of conceiving is not the basis of potential conceivability.[73] And from this it is clear that the principiator himself does not ground the im/possibility of things, but only possesses the power (in the case of God, who is of unlimited power) of conceiving any and all compossible unities. Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that

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[72] On *principiation* see King, 252-62.

[73] "I say that it is not, because the primary reason for possibility in creatures is not God's active power or omnipotence. In fact, the intellect is an even more primary reason for possibility in them, because it is through the intellect that they are first constituted in their intelligible being. Then I argue: whatever accounts for primarily constituting [creatures] in God in their intelligible being is also the primary reason for their possibility; but it is through the intellect, not omnipotence… that creatures are primarily constituted in their intelligible being." *Rep*. 1.43.22, (2:526)

the principle of non-contradiction alone is the ground of im/possibility. How then should we understand the following statement by Scotus:

> In this regard one must say that impossibility in the impossible can be traced back to the divine intellect, not because there is some first impossibility in God that acts as the principle and cause of impossibility in creatures, but insofar as he contains the primary principle of principiation as regards the repugnant parts of the impossible. Indeed, [constitutive] parts of the incompatible, e.g., white and black, are of themselves mutually incompatible and formally repugnant. However, **they receive their first possible being from the divine intellect by way of principiation, and consequently they receive their incompatibility (as well as their formal principles) from the divine intellect by way of principiation — although they are such formally of themselves**. … And therefore the reason why 'white is black' is incompatible … is traced back to the divine intellect (as to a positive cause), from which formal elements of the impossible itself (in their possible being)—and consequently of incompatibility as a whole — originate primarily by way of principiation. (Ibid. n. 24 (2:527-28))

This perplexing passage seems to turn upside down what we have just said, for it turns out that simple possibles, prior to any repugnancy, are dependent upon the intellect (in this case the divine intellect) by way of principiation. In order to understand this, we must return to examine the apparently obvious notion of possible being. This actually rather treacherous notion, which seems equivalent to the possible, is not the possible but rather grounds the possible: "God by his intellect produces a possible in possible being" (Deus suo intellectu producit possibile in *esse* possibili), (*Ord.* 1.43.16 (6:359)) "from which formal elements of the impossible itself (in their possible being) - and consequently of incompatibility as a whole - originate primarily by way of principiation." (*Rep.* 1.43.24 (2:528)) In order to confront this difficulty, two things need to be

clarified. Firstly, we need to determine why the formal elements of the impossible itself, which originate by way of principiation, are not determined by God but rather produced *ex se*. Secondly, we must understand the manner by which the possible is produced in possible being.

In order to understand why principiation does not suggest that the possibles are dependent formally upon God's intellect,[74] we need to go back to Scotus's solution to the problem of *divine illumination.* There Scotus answers an objection that we may paraphrase as follows: If the "formal elements of the impossible itself… originate primarily by way of principiation" (Ibid.)) then "God's will is the immediate principle of any act *ad extra"* (*Ord.* 1.3.1.4.268 (3:163, 137)) Scotus's answer is based on a distinction between 'act according to nature' and 'act according to will'. Thus we can speak of principiation according to necessity as an act of intellect, and principiation according to undeterminateness as an act of the will.[75] The sort of principiation from which the "formal elements of the impossible itself… originate primarily" is such that it acts by necessity and is indifferent to the agent's will[76] which determines contingently whether a thing will exist or not.[77]

Let us note that this comparison between that which grounds im/possibility and the refutation of divine illumination, to which Augustine turns in order to explain how necessary truths are understood, reveals an important similarity between that which grounds natural production and the impossible. For just as divine illumination is concerned with truths where "the highest degree of

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[74] See Mondadori, 370-1, footnote 80.

[75] "I reply: the divine intellect produces these objects in intelligible being *(in esse intelligibili)* insofar as it [i.e., the intellect] is somehow prior to an act of the divine will. With respect to these objects, therefore, it seems to be a purely natural cause, for God is only a free cause with respect to things that somehow presuppose the will as an act of will." *Ord.* 1.3.1.4.268 (3:163-64, 137) See also *Ord.* 1.38.9 (6:306-7).

[76]"A created thing has its possible being before God's active power… comes into play." *Rep* 1.43.9 (2:521)

[77] "Divine omnipotence, as distinguished from the intellect, is not the principle of a thing except insofar as the existential being of this thing is concerned." *Ibid*, n. 11 (2:522)

naturalness *(naturalitas)* occurs with respect to the effect both of the remote cause and of the proximate cause", so the impossible is such that its terms are necessarily repugnant to each other in "the highest degree of naturalness". For just as a necessary proposition is "naturally suited to cause an evident conformity between the terms and their combination", (Ibid., n. 269 (3:164-5, 138)) so we may say that a contradictory proposition is naturally unable to make any sort of conformity between the proposition and its terms. Consequently, both the necessary and the impossible necessarily move or necessarily prevent the movement of the intellect. This movement is grounded in the nature of the intellect itself, that as a natural agent is indifferent to any sort of free determination by the will.

On the Constitution of Secondary Objects of Thought in the Divine Mind

We shall now turn to Scotus's exposition of divine thinking in order to understand better the constitution or the production of "possible beings" in the divine mind, or what are known as the secondary objects of thought. After discussing God's primary object of intellection, i.e., the divine essence,[78] Scotus asks whether there are other things or objects in the divine understanding.[79] He maintains that there are such secondary objects, though while the divine intellect is moved by its primary object, it is not moved by such secondary objects.[80] Scotus explains that secondary objects, which are incapable of moving the intellect, can relate to the intellect as things "terminating an act of a potency," (*Rep*. 1.36.1.1-2.11 (2:383)) i.e., as an act of a potency that can be determined further in a secondary manner. Such termination can occur in two ways: Either (1) as its proper

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[78] *Rep*. 1.35.2.
[79] *Rep*. 1.36.1.
[80] Ibid, nn. 10-1. Also "The divine essence, which moves the intellect to this act, namely, of knowing itself, moves [it] virtually to the knowledge of all that is contained in the essence, which are all the intelligibles." *Rep* 1.35.2.90 (2:379). Also *Ord.* 1.35.53 (6:268).

notion, as when the sensible terminates the sensual act; or (2) when "it is included in the notion of another object that terminates the act of that potency primarily." (Ibid., n. 12 (2:384) [81] As an example of the second case, Scotus suggests an object of the common sense which stands in a secondary relation to the sensual act. Scotus further argues that the first way by which an object terminates an act of potency is inapplicable to the [divine] intellect, for such an object "is necessarily required for that act", (Ibid. n. 15) and according to Scotus, nothing which is created and finite can be required by an infinite act (a maxim which applies to the human "potentially" infinite intellect as well). Scotus therefore endorses the second explanation according to which created finite intelligibles terminate the divine intellectual act "but only secondarily, qua included in the [primary] object that terminates [it] primarily" (Ibid. n. 30 (2:389)) i.e., the divine essence. Termination by secondary objects is not necessary for the first act of intellection but rather follows it and depends upon it. This means that termination "is not related to the act of divine intellection as measure to what is measured by it, but the other way around." (Ibid., n. 16 (2:385))[82]

Scotus maintains that there can be no doubt that there are distinct relations of reasons in the divine mind,[83] the question is whether they are necessary in order for God to have distinct

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[81] "An object can terminate an act of a potency in a twofold manner. Either the object terminates the act of that potency in a primary sense, according to its proper notion, as something sensible terminates primarily the act of sense perception; or it terminates it in a secondary sense, insofar as it is included in the notion of another object that terminates the act of that potency primarily. For example, an object of common sense, such as quantity, terminates the act of sense perception in a secondary manner, compared to the proper object of sense." *Rep.* 1.36.1.1-2.12 (2:383-4)

[82] "'can any created being terminate the act of the divine intellect as an object that terminates that act secondarily, by virtue of being included eminently in the primary [object, i.e., the divine essence,] that terminates that act-i.e., as terminating it by reason of, and in virtue of, that first object that terminates the divine act in a primary sense?' Then I say that this could be so. Indeed, such an object is not necessarily required for the act, but rather follows from it and depends upon it: for such an object is not related to the act of divine intellection as measure to what is measured by it, but the other way around." Ibid. n. 16 (2:385)

[83] As to the existence of those relations of reason Scotus claims that the divine intellect can relate itself to any intelligible which the created intellect can relate to the divine essence. See Ibid. n. 32 (2:389) Also Honnefelder 1990, 24-31.

knowledge of his objects. At first blush, Scotus seems to recognize the need for such relations, even preferring a view that "places these ideal relations in the essence qua object of knowledge… not [as it is] in itself, but as known." (Ibid., n. 45 (2:393)) This view holds that the divine essence can function as a principle of distinctiveness since "the relations are present insofar as God grasps Himself as imitable." (Noone 1998, 368)[84] Nevertheless, after seeming to endorse this solution to the problem, Scotus goes on to reject the need for relations altogether: "if that by which an external object is known… were limited to that object of cognition, the latter could be known through it distinctly without any conceptual relation." (*Rep*. 1.36.1.1-2.49 (2:395)) Scotus means that these relations are simply not necessary for God to have knowledge of creatures – and thus the examination of the various opinions regarding the problem becomes unnecessary. Against all these opinions Scotus argues as follows: Presume that God indeed requires relations of reasons in order to know his objects. Since these relations are knowable to God, Scotus asks by what means they are known to God? He answers, either through themselves, or through other principles or relations, or through the divine essence. If they are known through themselves, then the divine intellect would be moved by something other than itself, which is impossible. If by other relations, then the causal chain will continue *ad infinitum*. And if through the divine essence, then these relations are not really required in the first place.[85] Scotus provides an account of the production of secondary objects by describing four "instants" characterizing the divine mind:

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[84] Scotus devotes some effort to work out the second alternative. He then raises a problem: whenever in man there is an act of intellection of something real then this act has a real relation to that act. When our intellect is not related to a thing through a real relation then intellection is carried out through the mediation of a conceptual relation by "understanding that it understands something, [it] relates itself to that [something], [and thus] it causes in itself only a conceptual relation to that other thing." *Rep*. 1.36.1.1-2.44 (2:393) Following this line of argument Scotus raises an objection regarding the second opinion (nn. 46-7): Any relation by which the divine intellect relates must presuppose the related things and a knowledge of the related. Scotus answers: the act of relating in the intellect and the existence of the creature as known in the intellect are correlatives, and thus simultaneous, and so cannot exist without each other.
[85] *Ibid*, nn. 50, 56. See also Noone 1998, 369.

God in the first instant understands his own essence under merely absolute reason; in the second instant he produces a stone into intelligible being and understands it, so that there is a relation in the understood stone to the divine intellection, but there is not yet any relation in the divine intellection to the stone, … in the third instant… the divine intellect can compare its own intellection to any other intelligible to which we can compare it, and then by comparing itself to the intellected stone, it can cause in itself a relation of reason; in the fourth instant the relation that was caused in the third instant can be quasi-reflected, and then that relation of reason will be known. (*Ord.* 1.35.32 (6:258))[86]

The first moment of beatific intellection seems comprehensible.[87] The problem arises with the subsequent moments. If secondary objects are understood in the second moment, what need is there to compare them to the divine essence as understood? In the prologue, Scotus describes a similar process and explains that while "in the second moment of nature the quiddities contain virtually proper truths, in the third moment these virtual and contained truths are known to God." (*Ord.* 1.Prol.3.1-3.200 (1:135)) As is evident, Scotus distinguishes between the knowing of the quiddities, which occurs in the second moment, and the knowing of their truths, which are contained only virtually in the second moment. Whereas the third moment marks a reflective act, the second moment naturally and unreflectedly "produces a stone in understood being … [as a] term." (*Ord.* 1.35.49 (6:266)) As we have seen, Scotus explains that the secondary object can relate to the intellect as a thing "terminating an act of a potency," according to the second type, since it "is included in the notion of another object that terminates the act of that potency primarily." (*Rep.* 1.36.12 (2:383-4)) The example of an object of the common sense sheds light on this point. While

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[86] Note that in *Rep.* 1.36.1.1-2.60-66 (2:399-403) a more detailed discussion is outlined with some modification which in my opinion offers a less coherent view.

[87] *Ord.* 1.35.27 (6:256)

the eye perceives only color, for instance, by terminating the color the common sense perceives the shape of the boundaries of that color. These shapes are not real things nor are they parts of the color perceived, but rather they are produced from color as terminated and ordered in a specific arrangement. This explains why Scotus speaks of production and understanding, which appear to constitute two distinct moments, as a single moment. Whereas shapes are perceived simultaneously with the perception of color, the understanding of the truth of these shapes, e.g., as a triangle with all its properties, requires a different act of knowing according to the measurement of truth. So whereas in the second moment the shape of the thing is perceived in the thing and so absolutely, in the third and fourth moments, the truth of the thing is perceived in relation to the measurement of truth. Just as the common sense produces[88] common terms through the primary sensible according to its ratio, so also the production of the secondary objects is achieved through the understanding of the divine essence. Just like shape, which is merely derivative and is perceived together with the color, so also the secondary objects, while being only terms of the understood divine essence, are perceived together with the understanding of the divine essence. These secondary known "objects have being in a qualified sense, namely objective being," (*Ord*. 1.36.47 (6:291)) and are what Scotus calls diminished beings. They are not cancelled beings, but rather beings in a certain respect, just as an accident has being in a certain respect through its substance.[89] The primary object, which acts as a "moving reason" (ut ratio movens) (Ibid, n. 41 (6:287)) and which moves the intellect itself, is that in which the secondary objects are perceived. It acts as a mirror which lends to the secondary objects a diminished being through reflection.

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[88] In *Ord*. 2.1.1.82-4 (7:43-44) Scotus distinguishes between creation and production and concludes that "to be produced is not to be created, because something is not created into being without ado, but is produced into being in a certain respect."

[89] *Ord*. 1.36.1.1-2.32-35, 44, 54 (6:283-5, 288, 292-3)

One might object that while it is apparent how the shape of the stone can be perceived within the perceived stone, it is not clear how the stone can be perceived in the divine essence as understood. It is nevertheless clear that this is exactly what Scotus had in mind in *Quodlibet* V. There he discusses the manner in which any entity, according to its formal possibility, emanates from the divine essence which is "an infinite and limitless sea of substance." (*Quodl.*, 5.55 [25], 127)[90] Scotus, who builds his concept of *infinite in act* from infinite in quantity[91], explains that while the infinite in quantity is that which is composed of its imperfect parts, infinity in act is that which transcends any of its parts. This is similar to a continuous infinity which is not constituted from its parts but rather the inverse, its parts, the numbers, are produced by its limitation.[92] This constitutes the relation between the parts and the whole, not insofar as the whole is made out of its parts, but rather as the imperfect (parts) in relation to the perfect (whole). From this we readily understand why every created thing, as part, maintains an internal non-mutual relation to the whole, while at the same time the whole, which is not made out of parts, stands in no relation to the parts.[93] Moreover, this basic relation between the created thing as part (which, indeed, may also be eternal) also constitutes its mode of being: "every other being distinct from the infinite

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[90] "The essence is infinite in itself, not only intensively but also virtually, as containing primarily and of itself everything intrinsic to the divine… the essence has infinity formally, properly, and primarily, because it contains it of itself. It is called a sea, since it contains every intrinsic entity insofar as it is possible to contain it formally… [and from it] emanate all other features in an orderly fashion. First, indeed, are the intrinsic essential features, expressing no relation to anything extrinsic or ad extra. Second, come the notional [or personal properties]. Third and last, created or extrinsic things." *Quodl.*, 5.55 [25], 127.

[91] See Davenport, 240-306, Honnefelder 1979, 385-390, Honnefelder 1990, 110-121.

[92] "If we think of something among beings that is actually infinite in entity, we must think of it… as an infinite being that cannot be exceeded in entity by any other being. It will truly have the character of something whole and perfect… While something actually infinite in quantity would not be missing any of its parts or lacking any part of quantity, still each of its parts would lie outside the other and consequently the whole would be made up of imperfect elements. A being infinite in entity, however, would not have any entity outside itself in this way. Neither would its totality depend upon elements which are themselves imperfect in entity, for it is in such a way that it has no extrinsic part; otherwise it would not be entirely whole… An infinite being, however, is perfect in such a way that neither it nor any of its parts is missing anything." *Quodl.*, 5.7 [3], 109-10.

[93] See *Ord.* 1.8.1.2.37 (4:168). Also see Honnefelder 1990, 117-8.

being is called "a being" by participation because it captures a part of that entity present there perfectly and totally." (Ibid., n. 57 [26], 128)[94] As a result, every partial thing, whether in reality or as an idea, is constituted as a *vestige*, which is a part of the whole not insofar as the whole is made of such parts, but insofar as the imperfect is related to the perfect which transcends it completely.

The Vestige

Our discussion regarding the production of the secondary objects of the divine intellect yields conclusions which apply not only to intelligibles in the divine mind, but also to any partial being qua partial being which is directed to its whole through participation, whether existing in the mind or outside of it, and whether temporal or eternal. In *Ordinatio* I, d. 3, p. 2, which is devoted to the vestige,[95] Scotus turns to examine the creature's participation as a part of the divine whole, by considering the manner in which each creature contains a vestige of the Trinity.[96]

Let us begin by examining Scotus's predecessors' opinions regarding the vestige. In *Sentences* I, d. 3, Aquinas explains that 'vestige', or footprint, is a term which designates a similitude which is deficient or imperfect, yet does lead to actual knowledge of what of which it is a likeness. Creatures are as such imperfect similitudes of God and thus his vestiges. While the creatures represent God's attributes to a relatively high degree, they represent the distinctness of the divine

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[94] "Infinity in entity expresses totality of entity, whereas finitude in its way expresses only partial entity, for every finite being as such is less than the infinite as such… nothing created can be a part of him, but everything finite, since it is less than infinite entity, can be called a part, although not according to some definite measure, for it is exceeded infinitely. In this way every other being distinct from the infinite being is called "a being" by participation because it captures a part of that entity present there perfectly and totally." *Quodl.*, 5.57 [26], 128; "I say that 'to participate'… involves a twofold relation - of the part to whole and of taker to taken." *Ord.* 1.8.1.2.37 (4:168).
[95] Honnefelder 1990, 45, footnote 178.
[96] *Ord.* 1.3.2.281-323 (3:173-194); *Lect.* 1.3.2.208-248 (16:311-324).

Persons to a lesser degree of clarity.[97] The vestige can be discovered in creatures "according to the way this or that in the complex perfection of the creature is assigned the formality of *principium, media* and *finis*." (Richards, 78)[98] Such vestiges can be found in any creature in "full possession of its own existence." While the vestige represents God in an imperfect and confused way, the image represents him in a complete sense. The image of God can only be found in creatures which imitate and represent God in a more perfect way than merely by being creatures.[99] This more perfect representation is achieved by the powers of the soul: the *memory*, *intellect* and *will*[100] which together represent the triune.[101] In *Summa* q. 45, a. 7, Aquinas explains that every effect represents its cause but in differing degrees. Some effects represent the causality and some the form of that which causes. The first, which only represents the causality, is a vestige "as smoke represents fire… for a trace shows that someone has passed by but not who it is." The latter is called image and represents the form of that which causes, like "fire generated represents fire generating; and a statue of Mercury represents Mercury." Whereas in the soul there is an image of the Triune, other creatures, as created, stand in relation to something else which is their principle – and so contain a vestige of the father who is the "principle from no principle." Created things are not only vestiges insofar as they are created, but also insofar as they contain forms, i.e. they are vestiges of the Word. Created things are thus also vestiges of the spirit, for they have "relation of order… because the order of the effect to something else is from the will of the Creator." (*ST*. 1.45.7 answer)

Bonaventure, commenting on this very distinction of the *Sentences*, "whether God is cognizable through creatures," says that "not only is an effect cognized through (its) cause, but

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[97] Aquinas, *Sent*. 1.3.2.1 sol.
[98] See Aquinas, *Sent*. 1.3.2.2.
[99] Ibid. 1.3.3.1, ad 1, n. 318.
[100] Ibid. 1.3.4.1, sol n. 333.
[101] Ibid. 1.3.3.1 sol n. 317.

also the cause through (its) effect" (Bonaventure, *Sent*. 1.3.2.4, answer) and so God can be cognized as the cause of his effects. Bonaventure then raises two questions, namely what the difference is between a vestige and an image, and why it is that while all creatures are vestiges of God, they are not all his image? Bonaventure rejects the following opinions: 1. the vestige refers to the sensibles while the image refers to the spirituals. (This is not valid for the vestige also refers to spirituals such as the transcendentals.) 2. The vestige represents only the part while the image represents the whole. He replies that this is also not true, for God is simple and therefore nothing can represent him as a part. As such God's infinity cannot be represented by any finite number. Bonaventure argues that the difference between vestige and image lies rather in their mode of representation. While the vestige is more similar to a shadow representing something in a distinct yet confused way, the image is clear and distinct.[102] Creatures, he says, are said to be shadows (vestiges) in regard to the threefold efficient-formal-final causes, which exist in relation to the One, the True and the Good. Image, on the other hand, exists in relation to God not only according to such causes, but also in relation to him as memory, intellect and will.[103] This is the triple-aspect of the vestige: It is one insofar as "distinct from any other, [it] looks back to God as its efficient cause"; it is true insofar as "it has a true 'being', [that] looks back to Him as (its) exemplar cause"; and good insofar as "it has a good 'being', it looks back to the Same as (its) final cause." (Scholium) Whereas the vestige leads "to the cognition of things common, as common", e.g. from a footprint of a cow one cannot tell which specific cow it is, while an image leads to the cognition of things specifically, as in that specific cow. Aertsen, summing up Bonaventure's view, explains

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[102] Ibid. ad 4.
[103] Ibid. response 4.

that his conception of the vestige and its participation in the divine constitutes created things through a nexus of transcendental relations without which no thing can be.[104]

Addressing the view that the vestige is an imperfection,[105] Scotus notes that the vestige cannot be an imperfect and confused representation of the whole, since it is only a representation of the part.[106] As such, the vestige is a likeness of the expressed part, i.e. of the finite. Similarly, it cannot be a likeness of the expressed whole, the infinite.[107] Following Bonaventure then, the vestige can represent God only according to common concepts, the transcendentals, and not according to a specific concept.[108] Scotus nevertheless rejects Bonaventure's view that the vestige is composed of a threefold relation of causes. He distinguishes between the two first modes of relations, which are real and mutual, and the third mode which is non-mutual. All relations between creatures and God are non-mutual, he argues, and thus the vestiges belong to the third absolute non-mutual relation,[109] which is "a relation of knowledge to the knowable… as measured to the measure." (*Ord.* 1.3.3.1.297 (3:344-5)) The non-mutual relation of vestige is "absolute… in which that relation is founded" (Ibid. n. 295 (3:343-44)) and "show[s] in [itself] a certain unity, and form, and order."[110]

It is at this point that Scotus turns to consider the ground upon which the relation of vestige rests. This examination parallels *Ordinatio* I, d. 36, in which Scotus asks whether or not the

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[104] Aertsen 2012, 151. In *Sent*, 2.16.1.2.4 Bonaventure says: "'to be an image of God' is not an accident to man, but rather (something) substantial (to him), just as 'to be a vestige' accedes to no creature".

[105] *Ord.* 1.3.3.1.286 (3:339-40)

[106] Ibid. n. 289 (3:341)

[107] Ibid. n. 293 (3:342)

[108] Ibid. n. 294 (3:342-3)

[109] Ibid. n. 296 (3:344): "that those three relations belong to the three modes of relatives, this appears to be false, because… in the first two… it is a mutual relation, in the third it is not… but all relation of creature to God is not mutual… therefore every relation of creature to God is according to the third mode."

[110] *Ord.* 1.3.2.298 (3:181, 151): "[T]he trace does not consist in relations alone but in something absolute."

secondary objects of the divine intellect derive their essential being from their internal relational constitution. Here Scotus primarily means to criticize Henry of Ghent, who founds the being of the secondary objects of the divine intellect on participation in the divine exemplar: "man is not of himself a true or valid being [*ens ratum*]" but "is a valid being insofar as he participates in the first thing as exemplar … insofar as he has an eternal relation to God as knower and exemplar". (*Ord*. 1.36.1 (6:271))[111] The matter of the foundation of the vestige and secondary objects in the divine intellect turns upon the notion of *ens ratum*. This notion forms part of the approach of some philosophers to the transcendentals, in particular those following Avicenna's position which considered 'thing' (*res)* to be the primary transcendental. Let us briefly examine the development of the notion *ens ratum*.

Res

According to Avicenna, *Thing* (*res*) and *Being* (*ens*) are notions that are impressed immediately on the soul by a first impression (prima impressio) and which are therefore not acquired from other and better known notions.[112] Avicenna presents two accounts of these first impressions:

1. Analogy: Just as the first principles are known through themselves and ground our ability to assent to propositions, so also there are first principles that are conceived *per se* and ground all conception: "If every conception requires a prior conception, then this state of affairs would lead either to an infinite regress or to circularity." (*Avicenna latinus*, 33)

2. *Communissima*: "What is most suited to be conceived through itself is that which is common to all things, as are "thing", "being" and "one"." (Ibid.) These concepts transcend the Aristotelian

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[111] Regarding the refutation of the doctrine of divine illumination see Goris.
[112] *Avicenna latinus*, Liber de philosophia prima I, ch.5 (ed. Van Riet, 31-2).

categories, they are *transcendentia* and are predicated of all of them. As such they are prior to everything else that is cognized; they are the first conceptions of the intellect. [113]

Jan Aertsen points out that the introduction of the notion of *res* is unique to Avicenna and is not mentioned in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. On a first glance, he explains, "thing" (*res*) does not seem to introduce anything new: "The Avicennian 'thing' is related to the certitudo of a thing, it signifies its 'whatness,'" (Aertsen 2012, 87) which expresses the intelligibility of the thing as what it is. What is new here is the conceptual relationship between that which signifies the whatness of things, *res*, and that which signifies the existence of things, *ens*. *Res* addresses that aspect of a thing according to which it has a "stable nature" (certitudo) which makes it be what it is, so that there is within a triangle or whiteness that by which it is a triangle or whiteness. This "certitude" is the "proper being" (esse proprium) of something and is its "whatness" (quidditas)[114] which grounds its stability and acts as the ground for the certainty of the cognizer. It is contrasted with the "affirmed being" (esse affirmativum) of something that is called *ens*.[115] This account of *res* can be reformulated and summarized as follows:[116]

1. A thing is described as that of which a true statement can be asserted. This is a circular definition which does not explain what a thing is, but is used rather to judge whether something is or is not a thing.[117]

2. A thing is that which has a certain reality (certitudo) which is also the proper being of that thing.[118]

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[113] Cf. Aertsen 1998.

[114] *Avicenna latinus*, 35: "Redeamus igitur et dicamus quod (. . .) est hoc quod unaquaeque res habet certitudinem propriam quae est eius quidditas."

[115] Ibid. 34-35.

[116] See also Pini 2011.

[117]*Avicenna latinus*, 1.5,6, 23-24.

[118] Ibid. 24.

In *Sentences* II, d. 37, Bonaventure discusses the ontological status of sin. Augustine's words that "the works of the devil, which are called vices, are acts but not things (*res*)," seems to entail a contradiction, because vices are acts and an act denotes a difference of being. And so it seems to follow that Bonaventure affirms that vices are differences of being, while denying that they are things or beings – which is impossible.[119] Bonaventure explains that *res* can be said in three ways: commonly, properly and more properly. Commonly *res* is derived from reor/reris, i.e. *res* of thought "I/you reason" and addresses everything that falls under cognition. Properly, *res* is derived from ratus/rata/ratum – as ratified or valid *res*. In this sense, a thing is said to be not only in regard to the mind but also in reality, in itself or in another (as accident), and is convertible with *ens*. More properly, *res* is derived from ratus/rata/ratum, and is said of ratified things which are in reality through themselves and not through another, i.e. only of substantive beings.[120]

The conceptual distinction between *ens* and *res* as conceived by Aquinas is based on the structure of that which is, which is a composition of quiddity and *esse*. Following Avicenna's two accounts of *res*, 'thing' is understood as a singular either outside the soul or in the soul, insofar as it is apprehended by the intellect. "Thing" as *reor/reris* is related to what is in the soul, while "thing" in the sense of *ratus* is related to what is outside the soul.[121] Addressing the same problem as Bonaventure regarding the reality of sin, Aquinas extends this distinction between the two modes of *res*: 1. the primary ontological meaning as *res simpliciter* as determinate and stable being

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[119] Bonaventure, *Sent.*, 2.37, dub. I (ed. Quaracchi, Opera Omnia II)

[120] Ibid: "'Thing' [res] is accepted commonly and properly and more properly… according to what is said commonly, it is said of 'I reason, you reason' [reor, reris]; and thus it comprehends every that particular, which falls under the cognition, whether it be an exterior thing, or in opinion alone. But properly… it is said of "ratified" being [ratus, rata, ratum], [which] is said to be… in the nature of things, whether it be a being in itself [ens in se], or in another… In a third manner 'thing' is said more properly… insofar as the 'ratified' being is said to be that which is a being through itself and fixed; and thus 'thing' is said solely of creatures and substances [having] being through themselves". Also *Sent.*, 1.25.

[121] Aquinas, *Sent.* 1.25.1.4.

(esse ratum et firmum) in nature which has a quiddity or essence. 2. *res* as knowable through its essence, and thus signifying everything that is apt to enter into knowledge or into the intellect. This latter mode derived from *reor/reris* signifies things which may not have stable being in nature, such as negations and privations.[122]

Henry of Ghent's point of departure is *res* in its most general mode: "The *ratio* of thing derived from reor/reris is the first in every created being." (Henry of Ghent, *Summa* 34.2, 174)[123] While Bonaventure and Aquinas try to account for the reality of sin as a privation of being, Henry's discussion in *Summa* 34.2 of cognizable *res* is carried out within the conceptual framework of fictitious being which does not include a privation of being and is ontologically indeterminate, though it is an essential aspect of the first cognizable mode of *res*.

Ens, according to Henry, is what has a quidditative being (esse quidditativum) that belongs to it as a product of its relation to the form of the divine exemplar; it is what is determined by the quiddity, the *certitudo* of Avicenna. *Ens* is a *res* as *ratitudo*, because "quidditative being" and "fixed being" are convertible.[124] While Aquinas identifies *ens* according to the act of being, Henry's ontology is derived not from things' actuality, but from their essential reality. *Ens* is a ratio and as such it is the first concept in the intellect as an object. *Res* in the sense of *reor/reris* is the thing's *quid intelligible* which is grounded upon *verum*, truth, according to the relation between *res* as a quidditative being and the divine exemplar, which makes truth perceptible to the mind. The character of being cannot be applied to things if it is not considered first according to its most general sense, i.e. according to the ratio of thing in the sense of *reor/reris* - which is the ground of

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[122] Aquinas, *Sent.*, 2.37.1.1.
[123] In Aertsen 1995, 14.
[124] Henry of Ghent, *Summa* 34.2, 174.

the relation which founds it: "Something cannot have the character of being unless it first has the *ratio* of a thing in the sense of reor/reris, in which the *ratio* of that being is founded (*foundatur*)."[125]

Ens ratum

Henry's conception of *res* is thus derived from the manner in which the intelligible participates in the divine intellect: "man is not of himself a valid being [*ens ratum*]", for "he is a valid being insofar as he participates in the first thing as exemplar… insofar as he has an eternal relation to God as knower and exemplar". (*Ord*. 1.36.1 (6:271)) When Scotus turns to examine the foundation of the vestige, he addresses those who hold the view, following Boethius' *Hebdomadibus,* that every caused thing has "that whereby something is" and "what something is", which differentiate between the thing and that by which the thing is (its foundation). "That which is" (quod est), as "they" explain, is said regarding a thing's *somethingness* (aliquitas) while 'that whereby it is' (quo est) is said of its 'ratitudo', i.e. of its validity. They conclude that the *relation of the vestige* is not founded upon a thing's **ratitudine**, according to its essence (as *res* taken according to ratus/rata/ratum), but rather only in its *somethingness* (aliquitas) which is its formal *ratitudo* (as derived from reor/reris).[126] Following a participatory argument, they conclude that that *somethingness* "is the relation of vestige".[127] In other words, just as created things possess their

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[125] Ibid, 175.

[126] "[T]hat 'by which something is and what something is *(quo est* and *quod est)* are different things.' That by which something 'is' is called its 'ratification' *(ratitudo),* but that by which it is 'what it is' or 'what' is called its 'somethingness' *(aliquitas).* Given these definitions, it is said that the trace relation in a creature is not based on the ratification of a thing but only on its somethingness and that it [the trace relation] formally constitutes its ratification [i.e., the ratification of the creature]." *Ord.* 1.3.2.302 (3:184-5, 154)

[127] "It is also argued that it is the trace relation *(respectus vestigialis)* by which the formal ratification of it comes about— first, in this way: what is included in the very concept *(intellectu)* of something as being this kind of thing is that by which the thing is such a thing or what is formally the same as the thing in its being such as it is. But the trace relation is included in the concept *(ratione)* of any ratified being." Ibid, n. 304 (3:185-6, 154)

being only through participation in God's *esse*, so participation in a first principle of intelligibility, i.e. the divine exemplar, is required.[128] Against this relational position, Scotus argues that ratification cannot result from a relation, because if it is by relation, then it is founded upon that to which it is related. But that to which it is related needs to be ratified in order to be the foundation of the relation, so that if the foundation of its ratification comes through a relation, the series will continue to infinity. Scotus concludes therefore that the ratification must be from within and not grounded in a relation.[129]

Scotus also examines Henry's distinctions between the three types of realities: opinable (*realitatem opinabilem,* capable of being thought according to *res* as reor/reris), quidditative, and of existence (possessing *ratitudo* according to ratus/rata/ratum). He adds that while the first is thinkable whether possible or not, a reality possesses a *ratitudo* when it is capable of being exemplified and thus becomes essential being.[130] Scotus agrees with Henry that impossible things possess no being (and are called *figmenti*), since *realitatem opinabilem* is common to both what is possible and impossible and it is unintelligible to say "that there are two whitenesses, one that applies to white and black and one that applies to white only." (*Ord*. 1.3.2.313 (3:190, 157)) He thus maintains that the impossible possesses no real being but rather only a fictitious being (from reos/reris).[131] While Scotus agrees that the two other types of realities, the essential/quidditative and that of existence possess being, he does not agree with Henry as to whether or not it is the

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[128] "[A]ny arbitrary being *(ens)* that is not of itself 'being' (esse) but a being to which 'being' belongs is not a ratified being unless by participating in 'being' itself or insofar as it participates in 'being' itself. Everything other than God is something to which 'being' belongs and not 'being' itself; therefore, it is not ratified unless insofar as it participates in 'being.' So it is formally ratified through that participation." Ibid.

[129] Ibid, n. 313 (3:190). Or in the words of Marrone 1988, 44: "If not, then no relation with anything else whatsoever could make up for the metaphysical emptiness of the object".

[130] *Ord*. 1.3.2.310 (3:188-9), summarizing Henry's position in *Summa*, a. 21, q. 4, solution.

[131] Ibid. n. 311 (3:189).

same kind of being. Henry divides being into two kinds, according to existence (*ens secundum existentiam*) and according to essence (*ens secundum essentiam*). This latter rather mysterious kind of being is grounded through a "manifestation of a relation to God in which each essence was involved by virtue of its very essentiality." (Marrone 1988, 39)[132] Analyzing the concept of *ens ratum*, Scotus maintains[133] that Henry simply misunderstood the duality encapsulated in its meaning[134]:

1. Either "it has of itself firm and true being, of essence or existence" or "it is what is first distinguished from figments, i.e. that to which the true being of essence or existence is not repugnant." (*Ord.* 1.36.48 (6:290))

2. Something possesses *ens ratum* only insofar as its formal content does not contain an internal repugnancy. This is a "ex se ens ratum".

    When the first sense of actually existing being is applied, then a thing such as man is not of himself "a valid being but from efficient cause" and thus "there is never a valid being unless it is existing." (Ord. 1.36.49 (6:290). Honnefelder explains that in this sense of *ens ratum,* it is a ratified being only insofar as it is caused and really exists.[135] Scotus adds that none of this implies that such beings cannot be known unless they exist, for definitional knowledge can be obtained through the knowledge of the thing's essential parts. Nevertheless, when a being is understood in the second sense, the only thing determining whether something possesses *ens ratum* is whether its formal content includes an internal repugnancy or not. This, Honnefelder maintains, does not mean that man is altogether like God, but is so only in a qualified sense, for "God is not only that to

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[132] For an elaborated account of Henry's view see Marrone 1985, 106-29.
[133] Richard Cross notes that Scotus seems to be misrepresenting Henry's position, see Cross 2010.
[134] More on Scotus' criticism and absorption of Henry's ontology see Marrone 2001, 460-80.
[135] Honnefelder 1990, 49.

which being is not repugnant, but he is of himself being." (*Ord.* 1.36.50 (6:291)) This is precisely what distinguishes contingent beings from necessary being.[136] Scotus argues against Henry that he has simply misunderstood the latter kind of *ens ratum* as non-repugnance to being by concluding that the eternal understanding of a stone in the divine mind, for example, requires a second type of being for its subsistence.[137]

Scotus's argument that the ratification of a thing is not a product of being related, but rather belongs absolutely to the thing, has important implications for the manner in which things participate in the divine intellect. Scotus explains that participation in "non est ens ratum, nisi in quantum participat ipsum esse" (*Lect.* 1.3.2.227 ((16:318))) can be taken in two ways, either as *quia* or *as in a subject with respect of its own passion*. Scotus concedes that it should be taken according to the latter rather than the former, for just as the secondary objects in the divine mind are not produced through an actual participation in the divine exemplar, but rather through a quasi or virtual participation, so the "stone insofar as [it is] a stone, participates in being (esse)," (and not "insofar as it participates it is a being"). (*Ord.* 1.3.2.326 (3:196, 160))[138] What is introduced here is a virtual participation in which things, insofar as they follow the second meaning of *ens ratum*, are not yet provided with real being, but are merely capable of participating in real being, i.e. they do not contain within them any repugnancy to being.[139] The second sense of e*ns ratum* is

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[136] *Ord.* 1.36.49 (6:290). In *Rep.* 1.36.62 Scotus explains that the understanding is really distinct in us from the object we know, and thus there is a relation between them of the measure to what is measured. With God it is not so, for his object of knowledge and the act of understanding are really identical. Also, God's act of knowing is not related to its intelligible object by a conceptual relation, because they are really two things, although not really distinct.

[137] *Ord.* 1.36.53 (6:292)

[138] "concedo quod 'tale ens in quantum tale ens', puta lapis in quantum lapis, participat ipsum 'esse': non-tamen est propositio vera e converso videlicet quod 'in quantum participat, est ens' …" *Ord.* 1.3.2.326 (3:196)

[139] List of causes of contradictory predication (the latter causes repugnance in being itself): *Ord.* 1.36.58-9 (6:294-5); *Ord.* 1.28.1-2.14 (6:112-4) (note the interpolation as well). To clarify *ens ratum* I suggest the following example: Before taking part in advance things (for example, the study of philosophy), human beings must be in a particular state, e.g., they must meet minimum economic/health levels of sustainability. So also every being must to meet some

not only that which makes things capable of quasi participation in being, but also grounds their quiddity. Just as those secondary objects are absolute which only participate virtually in the divine essence as understood, so also the quiddities which are conditioned by ratification are understood absolutely. This ratification is not just the cause whereby a thing participates in *esse,* but also that by which a thing can be recognized.[140] Things are not known due to a relation to God or anything else but absolutely, "for nothing is known unless by the knowledge of what belongs to its essence." (*Ord.* 1.3.2.327 (3:197-8, 161))

While Henry distinguished initially between *res ratitudine* (*esse* quiditativum or being of possibility) and actual existing things (*res existens in actu)*, and only secondarily between *res* within the mind and that which is outside of it, Scotus anchors his primary division in the distinction between *res* within the mind and *res* outside the mind.[141] Things outside the mind can then be distinguished according to being of existence or being of essence, though the being of essence is not taken absolutely but only secondarily, as an aspect of *res* as real being; as such every being, as part of its being, is constructed as being understandable. This circumstance of being understandable, which Henry added to things as their essence, is not another "floor" of their beingness but rather part of the very construction of what it is to be a being, i.e. it constitutes a transcendental condition of being. While things outside the mind are constructed as real objects, ontologically speaking, things in the soul cannot be taken to have an absolute being of their own. Just as the secondary objects in the divine mind do not possess their own real being but participate in the divine essence as understood, mental things in the soul do not have their own absolute being

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minimum level of sustainability. And just as behind economic/health sustainability stands a science or ratio of such sustainability, so also there is a ratio of being insofar as being which is the measure of the sustainability of every being (without which it would not be possible for it to sustain itself as a being).

[140] *Ord.* 1.3.2.326 (3:196-97); Honnefelder 1990, 48.

[141] *Lect.* 1.36.26 (17:468-69)

but have being only in a manner of speaking (*esse secundum* quid), i.e., "taken 'simply' insofar as [they are] related to the soul as the foundation of that being in the soul (esse in anima)." (*Ord.* 1.36.36 (6:285)) Mental things do not have their own being absolutely but rather only secondarily, in a manner of speaking, which Scotus sometimes calls *esse cognitum or esse diminutum* and other names, but which is actually based upon the being of the mind as a condition for the mind knowing its objects. It follows that the intelligibility of thoughts themselves requires no real relation to the divine exemplars. Rather mental things are products of the mind itself thinking of its objects. By doing so, it constitutes mental objects which possess no real relation to their objects (in the world or in God) but only conceptual relations.[142] Admitting such conceptual relations, which are not grounded upon the reality of the object but only upon the reality of the mind, allows the mind to consider things according to their essence/intelligibility, regardless of their ontological status, i.e. the intelligibility of things is not rooted in things themselves (either in the world, in God's mind or within our mind) but upon an act of the mind alone. Intelligibility is not based upon any kind of adequation but is grounded by the second sense of ratification as containing no internal repugnancy to participation in being.[143]

This is also the key to understanding Scotus's solution to the puzzle of how "*infallible truths are seen in the eternal rules*", i.e. the problem of divine illumination regarding the immutability of true things and their intelligibility. Scotus's solution is based upon four ways of understanding the manner in which we participate in the divine knowledge. According to Scotus the preposition "*in*" in the phrase *"in the eternal rules*" can be understood in one of four ways: "(1) as in a proximate object, or (2) as in that which contains the proximate object, or (3) as that in virtue of

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[142] *Ord.* 1.36.28 (6:281-82); *Lect.* 1.36.26 (17:468-69)
[143] *Ord.* 1.36.60-61 (6:296)

which the proximate object moves [the intellect], or (4) as in a remote object." Our main concern

is with the third alternative (the second, as something is within a book, and the fourth, as the

theologian knows the truth of thing through a real participation in God, are easily rejected[144]). The

third alternative, which is a modification of the first, explains that divine ideas are secondary

objects of the divine intellect and thus have existence only in a qualified sense. Such secondary

objects cannot move the intellect since the ideas exist only virtually, and, as a result, cannot

illuminate our intellect except through the divine essence which exists in an unqualified sense and

is the primary object of the divine intellect. Thus the light by which the "*infallible truths are seen*

in the eternal rules" lights our intellect in a qualified way, i.e. not as that which moves our intellect

but rather only as that which reflects and qualifies a primary and unqualified intelligible which

moves our intellect.[145] This qualified illumination that Scotus affirms, matches the dual relations

of the memory to its primary and secondary objects, where the primary object, which is the divine

essence in God's case, acts as a mirror, whereas the secondary objects, and in this case the divine

ideas, are reflected in the mirror. Thus the manner in which the possible is produced in possible

being is similar to the manner in which the reflected is reflected within the mirror, i.e. the manner

by which the accidental objects are reflected on the primary object of the memory. The

immutability of true things and their intelligibility are not grounded through human participation

in God's immutable act of thinking, but rather on the logical relations subsisting between the terms

which construct the proposition. This kind of necessity, since it is a product of the thinking mind

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[144] *Ord.* 1.3.1.1-4.262-64, 277-280 (3:160-62, 169-171)

[145] "[T]he things that are secondary objects of the divine intellect only have being *(esse)* in a qualified sense. But a real and true operation does not belong to what is precisely a qualified being *(enti)*. If it [such an operation] belongs to a qualified being, it does so in virtue of something that has being in an unqualified way. Therefore, it does not fit secondary objects to move the [human] intellect unless in virtue of the being *(esse)* of the divine intellect [itself], which is being in an unqualified sense … In this way, therefore, we see [truths] "in the eternal light in a qualified sense" as in a proximate object." *Ord.* 1.3.1.1-4.265 (3:162, 136-37)

which synthesizes such terms, although it is immutable, is still only a necessity *secundum quid* (in a manner of speaking), and not necessity in the sense we apply to God as absolutely pure and simple.[146]

Intuitive Cognition and the Principle of Non-Contradiction: Concluding Remarks

This paper has been divided into two major parts. The purpose of the first was to show that the same logic applied to thinking in the divine mind applies to the human mind as well. To this end, we undertook an investigation into the manner in which the notion of intuitive cognition underlies the synthesis effected by Scotus of the Aristotelian and the Augustinian systems with respect to the act of thinking. Scotus's key move, as we have seen, consists in an understanding that the same natural act of abstraction, which produces intelligible species in our mind according to necessity, constitutes them in the memory in a non-mutual relation (the third type of relation, as the measured to the measure). This non-mutual relation deprives the abstracted species of the natural causality from which they were abstracted, and enables the intelligence and will to consider them without being determined by them. In this regard, the human mind is able to act like God, who considers and conceives any composition of his mental objects which is logically compossible, so long as they contain no internal contradiction. The conclusion drawn from this part is that any intellection of secondary objects is conditioned both by that which grounds compossibility and the act of intuitive cognition which accompanies all acts of thinking. This insight made it possible in the second part to deepen our examination of the grounds of what is thinkable and the act of thinking in the divine mind. There we saw how God's secondary objects of thinking are virtually produced

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[146] *Ord.* 1.3.1.1-4.247-48 (3:151-52)

within his primary object of thinking, the divine essence, in a non-mutual relation so that they are seen within the understood divine essence just as shapes are seen within the things perceived by the senses. Moreover, it was seen that this non-mutual constitution or foundation of the objects of thought - their *ens ratum* - constitutes them as well as all other created things in a relation of quasi-participation which is not a real participation, but more similar to the participation of accidents in their subject: From the participation of blackness in a shirt it does not follow that the intelligibility of blackness is derived from the shirt, but rather from blackness itself. As such Scotus reverses the logic of participation: "the stone insofar as [it is] a stone, participates in being (esse)".

Though not discussed explicitly, it is clear that the relation between God's primary act of thinking whereby he intellects his own divine essence and the production of his secondary objects (and later their consideration and actualization by the will), parallels the human cognitive structure of *memory-intelligence-will*. It is easily seen that the act of intuitive cognition is present in the divine act of thinking, primarily in the understanding of the divine essence and secondarily in the understanding of the secondary objects. Thus we ask, does this clarification of the manner that God thinks himself and his secondary objects enhance our understanding of the relationship between intuitive cognition and that which grounds the thinkable? We believe it does.

Scotus's novel conception of *ens ratum* which grounds the intelligibility of all created things (and thus their conceivability) in a quasi-participitative manner, is in fact a condition for real participation in being: "the stone insofar as [it is] a stone, participates in being (esse)" In other words, the stone, or any other valid being, insofar as is conceivable, is capable of participating in *esse*. While what grounds the possible grounds it as conceivable, intuitive cognition is that cognition which conceives things in their actual existence. Whereas the conceivability of things is determined necessarily and *a priori* by the principle of non-contradiction, actually perceiving

things as existing is utterly contingent. This dual structure parallels both the duality of the memory and the duality of *ens ratum*: 1. The remembrance of past events carries with it the memory of the remembering subject as witnessing these events, and thus is a memory of contingent existence of a thing (i.e., *ens ratum* taken according to actuality) 2. Transcendental remembrance of a necessary truth is not deduced *a posteriori* nor does it reside within us simply as an innate object, but is known transcendentally, as for instance "though I know I was born, or that the world was created, I have no remembrance of this or that event". (*Ord*. 4.45.3.87 (14:165, 214)) Intuitive cognition stands at the heart of our acts of perceiving and remembering (the intuition of the primary perceiver upon which past and present things are reflected). Thus, just as *res* holds two primary meanings, so intuitive cognition can be taken in two corresponding senses: 1. Intuitive cognition taken formally, which grounds the conceivability of the mind, 2. Intuitive cognition taken according to actuality, whereby things are conceived in their reality. This dual structure seems to imply that the necessary conceivability of things, which is grounded in the principle of non-contradiction, and the actual conceiving of existing things, are two really different things. Yet to accept this view is to accept Henry's alleged fallacy that there are two types of beings. Against this position, it can be answered that just as the first type of *res* does not have real being but only a diminished being (which is perceived virtually within the intuited subject, whether the divine essence as understood by God or our intuited selves), so it follows that the conceivability of all the necessary conceivable possibilities is conceived as diminished or potentially conceived as part of the act whereby we intuit ourselves or the divine intuits the divine essence.

One might justly object and wonder why is it that the act of self-intuition, whether human or divine, grounds the principle of non-contradiction. Let us consider once more the doubt that was raised above on this matter, namely that if the "formal elements of the impossible itself… originate

primarily by way of principiation," then it follows that that which grounds the impossible is determined by the act of an agent and so according to the will. It was answered that although the formal elements of the impossible are principiated by an agent, yet the principiation can be taken according to nature or according to will, and that the act of intuiting the self is an act according to nature, i.e. of necessity. The act of intuiting is such that what is intuited primarily is intuited as the self by necessity. It is impossible that what is intuited primarily, which intuits by definition the self, intuits at the same time to a non-self. This is of course a paraphrasing of Aristotle's ontological formulation of the principle of non-contradiction: "It is impossible that the same thing belongs and does not belong to the same thing at the same time and in the same respect." (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, (1005b19-20)) The "same thing" which is here intuited is the self, and for that reason Scotus explains that the divine essence and the divine essence as understood are not two things but in fact one and the same thing distinguished only formally. So too with us. The act whereby we intuit ourselves and the self-as-understood are not two really distinct things, but are distinguished only formally. Just as the act of intuiting constitutes the principle of non-contradiction ontologically, it is echoed as a logical principle: "contradictory propositions are not true simultaneously." (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, (1011b13-14)) These principles are not two really distinct principles but are rather distinguished only formally from one and the same act of intuiting the self and nothing but the self. This does not mean that one cannot think the principle of contradiction when the content or object of my thought does not include an object that currently exists and is cognized as presently existing here and now. As we have seen above, though "the formal content (*ratio formalis*) of the terms is the necessary cause of the truth" (*Ord.* 1.3.1.4.234 (3:141, 126)) of the principle of non-contradiction, the apprehension of such a truth requires an act that perceives it, i.e., an intuitive cognition of the self within which it is reflected.

Sources, Abbreviations, and Translations

John Duns Scotus:

Lect. = Lectura: Prologue, I-III. Opera Omnia. edited by Commissio Scotistica. Vol. 17-21: Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 17-21: 1966-2004.

Ord. = Ordinatio, Prologue, I-IV. Opera Omnia. edited by Commissio Scotistica. Vol. 1-14: Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis: 1950-2013. Tranlations: *Ord*. 1.3: Scotus, John Duns. *On Being and Cognition: Ordinatio 1.3*. Translated by John van den Bercken. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. *Ord*. 4.45: Wolter, Allan B., and Marilyn McCord Adams. "Memory and Intuition: A Focal Debate in Fourteenth Century Cognitive Psychology." *Franciscan Studies* 53, no. 1 (1993). doi:10.1353/frc.1993.0006.

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Quaest. Metaphys. = Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle by John Duns Scotus, Bk. I-IX, Vol. 1-2. Translation: Girard J Etzkorn and Allan B Wolter. Text Series 19. St. Bonaventure, N.Y: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997, 1998.

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Thomas Aquinas:

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