

Perception and Objective Being: Peter Auriol on Perceptual Acts and their Objects

(Published in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 2016, Vol. 90, No. 1, p. 49-76.)

Lukáš Lička (University of Ostrava)

Abstract. This article discusses the theory of perception of Peter Auriol (c. 1280–1322). Arguing for the active nature of the senses in perception, Auriol applies the Scotistic doctrine of objective being to the theory of perception. Nevertheless, he still accepts some parts of the theory of *species*. The paper introduces Auriol’s view on the mechanism of perception and his account of illusions. I argue for a direct realist reading of Auriol’s theory of perception and propose that his position becomes clearer if we use the distinction between the first- and third-person perspectives which he seems to presuppose.

According to the medieval Franciscan philosopher and theologian Peter Auriol (c. 1280–1322),¹ our sensory powers play an active role in perception. This claim was typical for the older Augustinian approach common among the Franciscan thinkers of the thirteenth century.² Although Auriol shares some convictions and strategies with these thinkers (e.g. the claim that perception is a vital operation, emphasis on the first-person perspective in theory of perception, etc.), his intellectual foundation is more Aristotelian

¹ See e.g. R. L. Friedman, “Peter Auriol,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2009 Edition), ed. E. N. Zalta, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/auriol/>> for his life and works. Two works by Auriol are taken into account here: his commentary to the *Sentences* – esp. *Scriptum* of the first book (finished in 1316) and *reportationes* (*Rep.*) of his Parisian lectures on all four books (1316–18) – and his magisterial *Quodlibeta* (*Quodl.*, between 1319 and 1321). I use following editions: Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super primum Sententiarum*, 2 vols., ed. E. M. Buytaert, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute 1952–56) [abbr. “Buytaert”]; *Electronic Scriptum*, eds. R. L. Friedman; L. O. Nielsen; C. Schabel, URL = <http://www.peterauriol.net/editions/electronicscriptum/> [abbr. “E-Scriptum”]; *Commentarii in primum librum Sententiarum* (Roma, 1596); *Commentarii in secundum Sententiarum* (Roma, 1605); *Quodlibeta sexdecim* (Roma, 1605) [the last three editions abbr. “X”]. In the quotations from the *Rep.* II, I correct the text according to two manuscripts – Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, MS Conv. Soppr. A.3.120 [siglum F] and Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, MS 161 [siglum P] and repunctuate it occasionally.

² See e.g. J. F. Silva, “Medieval Theories of Active Perception: An Overview,” in: *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy*, eds. J. F. Silva; M. Yrjönsuuri (Dordrecht, 2014), 117–46.

or Scotistic. The activity of the senses means for Auriol simply the fact that sensory powers process the acquired information (*species* or similitude of the object) and thereby they put their object into “objective”, “intentional” or—most commonly in Auriol’s works—“apparent being” (*esse apparens*). This study explores to the exploration and explanation of what Auriol says about such a perceptual process.

My interpretation of Auriol is founded on two key interpretative theses: (1) that his theory of perception is characterized by direct realism; and (2) that his theory of perception can be usefully understood in terms of a distinction between the first- and the third-person perspectives. Regarding the first thesis: Auriol is undoubtedly a *metaphysical* realist; he proposes that objects exist outside our mind independently of our cognizing them. However, as we will see in the section I, some of his claims seem to imply a *representationalist account of perception* (the view presupposing that what we immediately and primarily apprehend are some mediating entities, so-called *representations*, and not the things themselves, which are therefore apprehended these only secondarily and indirectly).³ At other times, he seems to favor *direct realism* (the view that our apprehension of the external things is direct and not mediated). I argue for a direct realist reading; hence, neither the *species* nor *esse apparens* are representations in my interpretation. Moreover, I contend that Auriol is able to avoid the problems connected with *naïve realism* (the view that reifies appearances, holding that everything that appears also exists in that way). Auriol decisively denies that “everything that appears exists” as erroneous.⁴ He is capable of explaining such phenomena as illusion or perceptual relativity while neither reifying such appearances nor appealing to representations.

The paper’s second key thesis is that in order to understand better Auriol’s theory of perception it is sometimes useful to distinguish the first-person and the third-person perspectives. The distinction is well known from the contemporary philosophy of mind and consciousness.⁵ Third-person features of our cognitive experience are objective or intersubjective and thus analyzable by a sort of metaphysics (e.g. what is the relation between cognitive power and its object, what kind of entity is the cognitive act, etc.). First-person features are subjective and it is more accurate to use a sort of

³ Traditionally, there were tendencies towards representationalist reading among the interpreters: cf. e.g. K. H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham* (Leiden, 1988), 89–104, 317.

⁴ *Scriptum*, d. 3, q. 14, a. 1 (Buytaert II, 697, §31) and *Scriptum*, d. 9, p. 1, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 303–16).

⁵ For the present state of research, see R. Van Gulick, “Consciousness,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), ed. E. N. Zalta, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/consciousness/>> and the literature referred there.

phenomenology to describe them (e.g. conscious state of mind, attention, phenomenal properties of our cognitive experience, etc.).

In the first section, I examine the distinctive features of perception in Auriol's view and gather his claims about the topic that seem to be incoherent. In the next two sections I focus on his account of the mechanism of perception and argue that this incoherence is only apparent and not actual. Section II examines the role of *species* in Auriol's account: in his view, *species*/similitude is identical to the cognitive act. Section III is devoted to Auriol's peculiar notion of "apparent being". In my interpretation, *esse apparens* not only involves a special, cognitive relation among the beholder, the thing, and the aspect under which the thing appears to the beholder (from the third-person perspective), but also incorporates a conscious, phenomenal ingredient into our cognitive experience (from the first-person perspective). When the mechanism of perception is described, it remains to explain situations when the process is disrupted somehow and the sensory illusions may occur. Section IV is devoted to that issue.⁶

It is worth noting that the issue of perception does not have a prominent place in Auriol's works (which are, strictly speaking, theological). Nevertheless, he mentions perception quite often in the course of his works, employing the following strategy. His main interest is to study the nature of intellectual cognition; however, he believes that there is a deep similarity between acts of intellection and *perceptual* acts. Since perception seems to him more easily understandable, he is convinced that we can learn something about intellection by comparing it with perception. Therefore, it is sometimes possible for the interpreter to employ the strategy backwards: we can learn what Auriol thinks about perception from reading his considerations on intellection. Nevertheless, as will be shown immediately, there are some important distinctions between perception and intellection that every readers of Auriol should keep in mind.

I.

What is perception? One strategy Auriol uses in answering this question is to compare perception with two other kinds of cognitive experience – namely, with imagination and intellection. All these three kinds of cognition are similar to some extent:

⁶ Although there were some studies into Auriol's theory of perception (cf. esp. R. Wood, "Adam Wodeham on Sensory Illusions," *Traditio* 38 (1982): 213–52; Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 89–100; D. G. Denery, "The Appearance of Reality: Peter Aureol and the Experience of Perceptual Error," *Franciscan Studies* 55 (1998), 27–52), I assume the present paper is innovative in several aspects: it stresses the role of the *species* and perceptual acts, argues against representationalist reading of Auriol and brings new textual evidence (e.g. *Scriptum*, d. 35, *Rep.* II, d. 11, and *Quodl.*, q. 8) to the evidence taken into account in these older interpretations.

Auriol gathers them under the common notion of “comprehension” (*comprehensio*). In every case a cognitive faculty grasps an object by means of its act. But in what way do they differ? Interestingly, Auriol does not accept the common Aristotelian claim that faculties differ by virtue of their objects⁷ since “whatever we perceive can fall under the imagination, and whatever is imagined by us, our intellect can conceive”. The distinction among the faculties, therefore, is not established from the third-person perspective. They are not distinguished by the objects of their acts but by *the way* they grasp these objects, or, in Auriol’s own words, by the mode in that the objects appear to the acts (*modus apparenti*).⁸ Thus, we are aware of the distinction among the different kinds of cognition from the fact that every kind of cognition includes specific phenomenal properties, which is obvious from the first-person perspective.

Now, we can infer some distinctive features of perception by focusing on the peculiar mode in which the object appears to senses, and comparing it with the mode of appearing (1) in the case of intellection and (2) in the case of imagination.

(1) The first difference, between perception and intellection, is observable in everyday experience: What we perceive is not under the command of our will, whereas we can think about whatever we want. One possible explanation of the observation is that objects of perception are outside us (and, therefore, beyond the reach of our will), whereas objects of our intellect (i.e., universals in the first place) are in our soul. This explanation is mentioned already by Aristotle and discussed in Averroes’s commentary; Auriol explicitly refers to both places.⁹

In accordance with these sources, Auriol assumes that the diversity in our intellectual cognition is partially based on the fact that although intellectual cognitive acts are elicited by the conversion of our active intellect to the phantasms, this conversion is influenced by our will. We direct ourselves *voluntarily* to a more or less perfect impression made by an external thing and, as a result, our intellect creates a less or more universal

⁷ Cf. e.g. Aristotle, *De an.* II, 4, 415a16–23; Auriol ascribes this claim to Aristotle and Averroes in *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 4, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 291–4).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 382–5): “Est tamen considerandum quod comprehensio est quid commune ad intelligere, imaginari, et sentire. Differunt autem ista non propter alia <et alia> apprehensa, quoniam quicquid sentitur, cadit sub imaginatione, et quicquid imaginamur, potest intelligi, etiam singulare, ut alias patebit; sed differunt in modo apparenti.” Cf. also *Scriptum*, prooem., q. 2, a. 3 (Buytaert I, 204, §104).

⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *De an.* II, 5, 417b and Averroes’ commentary to that place in his *De an.* II, comm. 60 (Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, ed. F. S. Crawford (Cambridge, MA, 1953), 220–1). Auriol quotes both authors in the *Scriptum*, d. 36, p. 1, a. 2 (X 837aC–D).

concept according to the respective impression.¹⁰ On the contrary, the richness of our perceptual experience is not an outcome of our will – the impression made by the thing in our sight is natural, not voluntary. The degree of perfection of such an impression is based on fully natural factors (distance between the thing making impressions in our senses and us, state of our senses etc.).¹¹

Apart from the role of the will, perception and intellection differ also in the way their objects appear to the respective faculty, i.e. in their *modus apparendi*. A thing appears to the senses as a material individual, extended and situated in particular place and time. On the contrary, *the same thing* appears to the intellect *simpliciter*, i.e. regardless of its material givenness and as unsituated spatially and temporally. Auriol provides an illustration of this distinction using a notion of an imaginary straight line (*linea recta imaginarie ducta*). In sensory cognition we can extend this imaginary straight line from the eye to the object we see. The seen object is spatially localized by this line.¹² In contrast, in intellectual cognition we cannot extend anything like this straight line to the understood object, because intellectual cognition abstracts from every condition of quantity – namely, from extension, contours, distance and closeness, etc.¹³

The possibility of extending the imaginary line is based on the materiality and extension of both an object and cognitive power. Since senses are located in the material part of the human soul, and the object perceived by these senses is also material and

¹⁰ For the psychological mechanism whereby universal concepts are formed, see Auriol, *Rep.* II, d. 3, q. 2 and e.g. W. Goris, “Implicit Knowledge – Being as First Known in Peter of Oriol,” *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 69 (2002): 33–65, at 34–8.

¹¹ *Rep.* II, d. 3, q. 2, a. 4 (X 68bA–D; F 26va; P 23va–b): “[...] impressio, quam res facit in visu, est naturalis, non voluntaria, ita quod non subest imperio voluntatis, quod sit tanta vel tanta impressio [...] diversitas illa impressionum in visu non subest potestati nostrae sicut in intellectu. Et ideo non est in potestate visus, quod perfecte vel imperfecte recipiat impressionem; ymo hoc est vel ex debilitate potentiae, vel ex diversitate distantiae [...]”

¹² *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 1, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 385–8): “Sensui namque et imaginationi apparent res sub condicionibus quantitatis, videlicet ut distantes vel propinquae et in tali situ vel tali; unde non potest quis videre quin necessario id quod apparet situet, et videat sub quadam linea recta per modum oppositi facialiter et distantis [...]”

¹³ *Ibid.*, lin. 388–401. The use of the notion of *linea recta* for describing perception may have been adopted from optical tradition. Both ancient and medieval optics share the stress on a geometrical description of vision. Furthermore, Auriol explicitly refers to the authority of a catoptrical treatise concerning this issue: “[...] visa omnia directe videntur et sub quadam linea recta, imaginarie directa ab oculo in rem visam, ut patet libro *De Speculis*, propositione prima.” – *Scriptum*, prooem., q. 2 (Buytaert I, 208, §119). The treatise may be the Latin translation of the *Catoptrics* by Euclid, although the source has not yet been confirmed. Auriol explicitly refers to this work also in *Rep.* II, d. 13 (in manuscripts we read “hanc propositionem pono contra opinionem auctoris *De speculis*” – F 67ra; P 60vb; the Renaissance edition has misleading “*Avempace*” – X 182aA).

extended, we can imagine a straight line between them. On the contrary, intellect is essentially an immaterial part of the human soul. If our intellect could deal with material objects, it would follow that it is a material cognitive power. (The rationale behind these considerations is the principle that the mode of operating follows the mode of being.)¹⁴

(2) The second distinction is that between perception and imagination. In the tradition following Duns Scotus, the topic of sensory cognition was included in the inquiry into intuitive and abstractive cognition. In Scotus' view, perception is an intuitive cognition and thus terminates at an object that actually and really exists. In contrast, imagination is an abstractive cognition and thus grasps its object regardless of whether the object exists or not.¹⁵

Auriol criticizes the way Scotus draws the distinction between perception and imagination.¹⁶ In his view, the object's actual existence is *not* a necessary condition for perception (or intuitive cognition generally). In order to support this unusual claim, he refers to experiences of sensory illusions.¹⁷ For example, when we look at a shining object and then turn our sight to a dark place or simply close our eyes, we still see bright contours of the object – the afterimage. Thus, we can have an act of vision in our eyes even if the real object has vanished from our sensory field. According to Auriol, in the sensory illusion we still see *something* as present, and thus we have an intuitive cognition.

¹⁴ *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 4, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 233–7): “[...] *demonstrativa notitia linearis* [i.e. such cognition that enables the line to be led] *est et quoddam iudicium quantitativum quoad modum apprehendendi, non quidem quod sint ibi lineae tales reales, sed quia modus iudicandi est talis. Ergo non competit apprehensio talis potentiae non-quantitativae et incorporeae, alioquin incorporeum et non-quantum servaret in sua operatione modum corporeum et quantum, et non sequeretur modus operandi modum essendi.*” Auriol however proposes possibility of intellectual cognition of material singulars but not as material – cf. R. L. Friedman, “Peter Auriol on Intellectual Cognition of Singulars,” *Vivarium* 38 (2000), 177–93.

¹⁵ *Ord.* II, d. 3, p. 2, q. 2, ed. Vat. VII, 554, §323, cf. also *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 2, q. 2, ed. Vat. XVIII, 323, §290. (For quotations from Scotus I use the Vatican edition – Scotus, *Opera omnia*, ed. Commissio Scotistica (Città del Vaticano, 1950–); abbr. “ed. Vat.”.) Scotus' claims about the intuitive and abstractive cognition are not so straightforward as Auriol assumed – see Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 68–81 or R. Pasnau, “Cognition,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. T. Williams (Cambridge, 2003), 285–311, at 296–300 and the literature listed there.

¹⁶ For Auriol's criticism of what he thinks Scotus position is and his own articulating of the intuitive/abstractive distinction see *Scriptum*, prooem., q. 2, a. 3 (Buytaert I, 196–207). The topic is quite well explored in the secondary literature – cf. P. Boehner, “Notitia intuitiva of Non-Existents according to Peter Aureoli, OFM (1322),” *Franciscan Studies* 8 (1948): 388–416; Wood, “Adam Wodeham on Sensory Illusions,” 213–7; Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 104–12; J. Biard, “Intention and Presence: The Notion of Presentialitas in the Fourteenth Century,” in *Consciousness. From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy*, eds. S. Heinämaa, V. Lähteenmäki, P. Remes (Dordrecht, 2007), 123–40.

¹⁷ *Scriptum*, prooem., q. 2, a. 3 (Buytaert I, 198–9, §81–6). Cf. also section IV.

However, it is not an actual, really existing object, but something that exists to a much lesser extent (Auriol says, as will be expounded below, that it has only apparent or intentional being). Sensory illusions show us that we can perceive the non-existing (in the strict sense) as present. Similarly, we can have an abstractive cognition of something actually existing when we imagine it as not present. Therefore, Auriol concludes, Scotus' distinction between perception and imagination is not drawn appropriately. Auriol stresses the claim (mentioned above) that the distinction between kinds of cognition is not based on a difference on the part of object (e.g., on its actual existence), but on the way the object appear to us. He continues on to introduce the following four features that perception/intuition has and imagination/abstraction lacks.¹⁸

The first feature of intuitive cognition is that it is a direct cognition (condition of *rectitudo*) – we grasp an object directly, not discursively (*arguitive*) from a cause, effect, or sign. Second, the intuited object appears to us *as* a present one (condition of *praesentialitas*) – however, the object need not *actually be* present for we can grasp even an absent object as though it were present (*modo praesentiali*). Third, the object appears to us *as* actual (condition of *actuatio obiecti*), again even in the cases when it does not exist actually. The fourth and last condition simply repeats what is already included in the preceding ones – perception is able to re-make its object into an existing one (existing apparently, at least) when it does not exist really and actually (condition of *positio existentiae*).¹⁹

Having considered these Auriol's accounts of how the perception differs from both intellection and imagination, we can now summarize the distinctive features of perception. There are two points in which perception differs from intellection: (a) perception is independent of our will and (b) what is perceived by our senses appears to them as a material thing (as situated in some place and time). Further, it seems from his account of the differences between perception/intuition and imagination/abstraction that (c) the external object (or its real presence) is *not* a necessary condition for perception (the only necessary condition is that the sensory faculty be in act) and, further, that (d) the sensory faculty and its act are capable of a *production* or at least “shaping” of the object of perception.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 204–205, §104–9.

¹⁹ I do not interpret Auriol as claiming at this point that perception puts its object into *esse apparens* (see section II) whereas imagination does not (as Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 108 seems to assert) since such an ability of forming its objects in intentional being is a property of every type of cognition (both intuitive and abstractive). See *Rep.* II, d. 11, q. 3, a. 1, *passim*, where Auriol mentions *esse phantasiatum*, i.e. the mode of being of an *imagined* object.

Claims (a) and (b) seem to be compatible with some sort of direct perceptual realism: There are real objects outside us; they affect our sensory faculties making impressions in them, which we cannot control by means of our will. As a result, the objects appear to us as they really are, i.e. extended and occupying a place. In contrast, in claims (c) and (d) Auriol looks rather like a proponent of phenomenalism or representationalism: We can perceive things that do not actually exist and our senses are “formative” to some extent, as the cases of illusion suggest.

The remainder of this study is devoted to exploring this seeming incoherence. Sections II and III are focused on Auriol’s account of the mechanism of perception, including his act/object analysis and introducing his peculiar notion of *esse apparens*. I will argue for the direct realist reading: Although in every perception we perceive the thing under a certain *aspect*, we perceive it directly and not by means of a mediator. Even illusions can be described in that way – as we will see in section IV, they are products of defective perceptual process. In them we either grasp the real object that appears differently from what it is, or simply have a cognitive experience which can be described as having a quasi-object.

II.

Species and Cognitive Acts. As we have seen, Auriol is quite willing to use the first-person perspective in constructing his theory of perception. The point of departure in his analysis of the nature of cognition is not a reception of a form in an observer’s cognitive faculty (i.e. a sort of “physical” event, as many of his more Aristotelian-minded contemporaries suppose), but the *conscious* aspect of our cognitive experience: to cognize is for an observer “nothing other than to have something present by means of a mode of *appearing*”.²⁰ However, although the conscious aspect is an important feature of our cognitive experience, Auriol does take into account also the *mechanism* of cognition, at least to some extent. Vision as well as understanding has both passive and active aspects: (1) Cognition is passive insofar as our cognitive faculty undergoes a change and receives a real impression (*pati realiter*), and (2) it is active insofar as the faculty responds to the stimuli by an intentional action (*agere intentionaliter*), i.e., by putting the thing into

²⁰ *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 1, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 332–3): “[...] non est plus de formali ratione ipsius intelligere, aut cognoscere in universalis, nisi habere aliquid praesens per modum apparentis [...]” Cf. R. L. Friedman, “Act, Species, and Appearance. Peter Auriol on Intellectual Cognition and Consciousness,” in *Intentionality, Cognition, and Mental Representation in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. G. Klima (New York, 2015), 141–65, at 141–50.

apparent being.²¹ This and the following sections are devoted to the very mechanism of a veridical perception, i.e. perception under normal circumstances. I want to defend the thesis that Auriol's theory of perception is an original application of the Scotistic notion of the objective being (*esse obiectivum*) to the domain of sensation, combined with a few features inherited from the Aristotelian explanation of perception (though substantially reinterpreted).

As it is suggested by his insistence on the passive and the active aspects of cognition, there is a duality in Auriol's account of the topic. He proposes an act/object analysis of cognition experience:²² Every instance of cognition comprises (1) a cognitive act by means of which the cognitive faculty—being in-formed by a similitude or a *species*—grasps an object and (2) the intentional object, or, in Auriol's words, the thing insofar as it is grasped by an act and which has apparent being).

Now, what is a cognitive act? Or in Auriol's words, what is that *by virtue of which* (*id quo*) something appears to us and is cognized by us? Auriol proposes what we can call a "minimal" definition of a cognitive act: it is an absolute entity (*absolutum*) that has real or subjective (*subiectivum*) being in our soul. It is not so important for explaining cognition what this entity is in physical terms (whether it is a *species*, or something in the brain, or a so-called glacial humor in the eyes), as long as it is a real vehicle which makes the process of cognition possible and the thing cognized appearing.²³ Hence, it is obvious that Auriol does not focus on the exact physical or physiological realization of perception, unlike, e.g., his contemporaries who wrote treatises on optics or commented on the *parva naturalia*. Yet he tries to relate his account to the ones common in his time and uses the metaphysical terminology of sensible and intelligible *species* and acts (*actus*).

Influenced by Aristotelians' claim that perception is a reception of a form without matter,²⁴ some thinkers at the time expounded such an explanation of perception: an

²¹ *Scriptum*, d. 27, p. 2, a. 2 (E-*Scriptum*, lin. 538–40): "[...] *tam videre quam intelligere est pati et agere: pati quidem realiter, sed agere intentionaliter et secundum iudicium, in quantum visio et intellectio, ultra hoc quod sunt reale aliquid, ponunt res in esse intentionali et iudicato [...]*"

²² Arguments for an act/object approach to cognition are in his *Scriptum*, d. 27, p. 2, a. 2; see also D. Perler, "What am I thinking about? John Duns Scotus and Peter Aureol on Intentional Objects," *Vivarium* 32 (1994), 72–89, at 81–6. Auriol uses such an approach even in the cases of illusion – see the section IV.

²³ *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 1, a. 1 (E-*Scriptum*, lin. 411–4): "[...] *quicquid sit illud quo habeatur aliquid praesens per modum praedictum, sive illud esset pictura in pariete, sive cerebrum in capite, sive spiritus in cerebro, sive glacialis humor in oculo, sive species, sive quodcumque aliud, dum tamen res per illud haberentur praesentes et apparentes, non dubium quod dicerentur comprehensiones et notitiae quaedam.*"

²⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *De an.* II, 12, 424a17–24. On medieval Aristotelian theory of perception see S. Knuuttila, "Aristotle's Theory of Perception and Medieval Aristotelianism," in *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy.*, eds. S. Knuuttila, P. Kärkkäinen (Dordrecht, 2008), 1–22.

external object affects our cognitive faculties by means of so-called *species*, i.e. peculiar entities which are similar to this object. Such affection brings the faculty to the actuality (*actus*) and by means of this state, the faculty grasps the object. *Species* or form is a vehicle which precedes the cognitive act.²⁵ In contrast, other authors of this time deny that the very notion of *species* is necessary or even reasonable for explanation of cognition (Olivi in the case of sensory cognition, Henry of Ghent for intellectual cognition and Ockham for both of them).²⁶ In their view, the cognitive acts themselves suffice for such an explanation.

What is Auriol's stance? There is a disagreement among the scholars on this issue. Whereas some of them deny that Auriol's account of cognition presupposes the postulation of *species*,²⁷ the others claim that it has its place in Auriol's account.²⁸ Definitely, Auriol *does* use the term *species* quite frequently.²⁹ But in the context of cognition, it does not designate an entity that precedes the act but is used co-extensively with the term "act".

Auriol actually *identifies* the *species* and the act.³⁰ At the first sight, such a position seems highly implausible. An obvious objection comes to mind: If the *species* were identical with the act, it would follow that even a medium transmitting the *species* is *cognitive* – due to having the *species* in itself it would have cognitive acts.³¹ As Scotus remarks, the problem cannot be resolved by saying that *species* in the medium and

²⁵ For example Aquinas – see e.g. R. Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997), 11–8.

²⁶ See e.g. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 28–54, 130–5.

²⁷ L. Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1994), 1:286–90, or Friedman, "Act, Species, and Appearance," 157–64 (both on intelligible *species*).

²⁸ Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 98–100 and probably Perler, "What am I thinking about?," 81–6.

²⁹ Besides "*species*", Auriol uses other terms for designation of the same entity: esp. "impression" (*impressio*) suggesting that *species* is an effect the external object makes in the cognitive powers, or (perhaps most frequently) "similitude" (*similitudo*) stressing the fact that *species* is similar to the external object.

³⁰ Auriol repeats this unconventional claim from the earliest to the most mature of his works – cf. *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 1, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 569–648); *Rep.* II, d. 11, q. 3, a. 1 (X 127a–132a; F 47va–49ra; P 42rb–43vb); *Quodl.* q. 8, a. 3 (X 85a–86a). His source in this claim can be nobody else than Peter Olivi who also identified *species* with the act of cognitive power – cf. Olivi, *Sent.* II, q. 58 (Peter Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, 3 vols., ed. B. Jansen (Quaracchi, 1922–26), III, 470–3). There is, however, no explicit sign that Auriol could be influenced by the very text by Olivi. Rather, it is probable that he knew that position from Scotus' refutation of it – cf. Scotus, *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2 (ed. Vat. III, 282–284, §471–3). Auriol tries to defend the position exactly against Scotus' arguments in *Rep.* II, d. 11, q. 3, a. 1 (X 131bF–132aE; F 49ra; P 43vb).

³¹ Actually, this is one of the objections against this thesis made by Scotus – cf. his *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2 (ed. Vat. III, 283, §471–2).

species/act in the eye differ according to the various nature of their recipients (*propter diversa recipientia*). Just as whiteness is the same in a horse and in a stone, *species* in the medium and *species* in the eye are of the same nature (*eiusdem naturae*) and hence, if the *species* and the act were an identical entity, the medium would see.³²

Auriol has to deal with that objection – and his strategy is to stress the very point which Scotus refutes. Although the *species* and the cognitive act are the same entity, they differ in one aspect: *where* exactly they are received. When the *species* is in the medium (or in a non-apprehensive power), it is simply a *species* as a causal effect of an object and similitude of that object. But, Auriol stresses, when the *species* is in the apprehensive power, in a cognitive faculty of a living creature, the very same entity is the cognitive act.³³ The difference lies in the fact that similitudes that are in a cognitive faculty (and *only* those similitudes) are capable of setting the cognitive process going (see below).³⁴

Since *species* and act are in fact the same entity, distinction between them cannot be the *real* distinction but a minor one – we can call it “connotative distinction”.³⁵ Although the terms “*species*” and “act” signify the same simple thing, more is connoted by “act” than by “*species*”.³⁶ Cognitive acts—apart from signifying the simple quality—connote also what Auriol calls “objective appearance of the thing” (*apparentia obiectiva rei*), i.e. the thing presented and grasped by those acts insofar as it appears to them.³⁷ To illustrate such a distinction, Auriol introduces an example with a column (in a colonnade, we can imagine): we can call the very same column “left” or “right”. When we call it “left

³² *Ibid.*, §472.

³³ *Quodl.*, q. 8, a. 3 (X 85bC–D): “Et ideo dicendum, quod licet *species*, et *actus cognitivus* idem sint secundum suum absolutum, tamen differunt ratione in hoc, quod ubicunque in potentia non apprehensiva [...], similitudo illa ponatur, habet rationem tantummodo *speciei*, et non *actus*, et ideo *species* [...] in medio non est comprehensio; in potentia vero cognitiva est comprehensio, non additur autem aliud, dum est comprehensio nisi sola praesentialitas, et *apparentia obiectivi* [...]”

³⁴ The presupposition behind this claim is that perception is a vital operation and only living beings endowed by a cognitive faculty are capable of cognition. A criterion for cognitive experience is therefore life. See *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 1, a. 1 (E-*Scriptum*, lin. 345–50) and Friedman, “Act, Species, and Appearance,” 146–8.

³⁵ On the connotative distinction in Auriol’s theology, see R. L. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University. The Use of Philosophical Psychology in Trinitarian Theology among the Franciscans and Dominicans, 1250–1350*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 2013), 1: 576–577. For Auriol’s refutation of the Scotistic formal distinction, see T. B. Noone, “Ascoli, Wylton, and Alnwick on Scotus’s Formal Distinction: Taxonomy, Refinement, and Interaction,” in *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century*, eds. S. F. Brown, T. Dewender, T. Kobusch (Leiden, 2009), 127–49, at 148–9.

³⁶ *Rep.* II, d. 11, q. 3, a. 1 (X 132aD; F 49ra; P 43vb): “[...] *ad visionem enim plura concurrunt, quam ad rationem speciei, licet ‘visio’ nullam aliam qualitatem abstractam (F, P) dicat aliam a specie.*”

³⁷ *Ibid.*: “[...] *sufficit, quod ‘visio’ secundum rationem visionis connotet apparentiam obiectivam rei, quam non connotat (F, P) ‘species’ secundum rationem speciei [...]*”

column”, we signify by that expression the column and connote another column right of the first one. Contrarily, by calling it “right column”, we connote the column standing left of the first one. There is no real change in that column, of course.³⁸ Similarly, when a certain entity is in the medium, we can call it “species” and when the very same entity is in the sight, we can call it “vision” or “act of vision”, since we connote also the fact that there is a thing in apparent being which is presented by that act.

Why does a similitude sometimes represent the thing and sometimes not? After all, Auriol explicitly says that *species* and act are “of the same nature” – does it not follow that a similitude should always represent the thing no matter whether it is in the faculty, or in the medium? But Auriol denies that it does. Certainly, the similitude is *capable* of “representation”, i.e. of “making the thing present”. However, it does not have to exhibit this property everywhere and at any time. It does not have this property precisely from itself but only when it is in a suitable cognitive faculty.³⁹ Only in that case the thing is represented and the similitude can be called “cognitive act” properly.⁴⁰ The reason is that the faculty has an important role in eliciting the act, as we will see in the next section.

If the *species* is a representation and its proper job is to represent (*representare*), however, this raises the question of whether Auriol is a representationalist. I argue that representationalism would follow if the *species* was the primary object of the act. But Auriol resolutely denies that by introducing several arguments.⁴¹ For example, he adduces a metaphysical argument: Since the sight is a material faculty, it is not capable of having reflexive act; so its acts cannot apprehend anything that is *in* the faculty. Another argument is phenomenological: If the first object of our vision were the *species* in the eye, we would therefore attend to two different objects in every perception (one in our eyes and the second outside us); but we experience nothing of the sort.

Consequently, for Auriol, the *species* in our sight cannot be the first object seen by us (*primum visum*) and a mediator that we grasp in order to see the external thing. Auriol is more thorough in refuting the possibility of *species* being the first object of sight than many of his contemporaries were. In fact, some of them assumed that there is a certain

³⁸ Quodl., q. 8, a. 3 (X 85bF): “Dato quod species non differant ab actu realiter sed sola ratione scilicet solo actuali representare praesentiam subiecti. Videmus enim, quod sinistrum in columna non differt re, cum sit relatio rationis, et tamen amittit rationem dextri, sola immutatione facta alibi.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 85bD: “Quamvis enim similitudo semper sit apta nata praesentare obiectum et facere apparere, non tamen praecise hoc habet a se, nec in omni subiecto, et propter hoc [...] in medio, quamvis sit species, non tamen obiecta praesentialiter repraesentat [...]”

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, a. 2 (X 83bF–84aA): “[...] repraesentare sit rem praesentem facere; patet quod si ponatur similitudo in potentia, cui potest fieri repraesentatio, qualis est cognitiva, exhibebit actu rem praesentem; igitur omnis similitudo existens in potentia cognitiva ultimate disposita est actus cognitivus [...]”

⁴¹ For these arguments, see *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 2, a. 4 (X 783aE–783bD).

situation when the *species* can become the *object* of an act – namely a defective perceptual experience like illusions or seeing afterimages. For example, Scotus supposes that when we see afterimages, we have a visual act by means of which we grasp a *species* impressed in our eyes (presumably with big force due to a sharp light). Hence, *species* can be the object of a visual cognitive act in that special case.⁴²

Such a position is, of course, made possible by the thesis that *species* is something that *precedes* the act and is really distinct from it. Scotus assumes—in accordance with the optical tradition⁴³—that the seat of vision is the optic chiasm and the acts of vision are thus situated there. Since *species* is in the eye, there is a certain distance between *species* and the act and hence *species* can be seen. However, Auriol’s insistence on the thesis that *species* is really identical with the cognitive act disbars him from such a position – there is no possibility for *species* to become an object of the act according to his theory.⁴⁴

To sum up (and not mentioning Auriol’s emphasis on the immediacy as a feature of intuitive cognition/perception), it is clear Auriol denies the claim we perceive external objects secondarily through perceiving their *species* first, which is essential for representationalist account of perception. I contend that when Auriol calls *species* “representation” and its proper job “representing” (*representare*), we should understand him quite literally: *species* is a vehicle which permits the thing to be *presented* to a cognitive power – and nothing more.

III.

Appearances: the Objective Being in Perception. Let us now turn to the second, active aspect of perception, which completes the process of perception and which Auriol describes metaphorically: Acts put the things into “apparent being” (*esse apparens*). What is *esse apparens*? I argue that it involves a special, cognitive relation (from the third-person perspective) and that it introduces a conscious, phenomenal ingredient into our cognitive experience (from the first-person perspective). The end of the section is devoted to the question whether this amounts to a mental representation and—again—whether it leads Auriol to perceptual representationalism. I answer both questions in the negative.

⁴² Scotus, *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4 (ed. Vat. III, 145, §239).

⁴³ Cf. e.g. Roger Bacon, *Perspectiva* I, d. 5, c. 2 (Roger Bacon, “*Perspectiva*,” ed. D. C. Lindberg, in *Roger Bacon and the Origins of Perspectiva in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1996), 1–338, at 62–4).

⁴⁴ As a consequence, Auriol is forced to search for other ways to explain sensory illusions – see section IV.

How is the cognitive mechanism completed? The *passive* reception of a *species* in the cognitive power is not cognition yet. In that case, even a medium itself would be capable of perception – after all, it *receives* forms.⁴⁵ In Auriol’s view, the cognition is “to have something present by means of a mode of appearing”⁴⁶ and the *species* itself is incapable of fulfilling this definition (recall the section II: it does not have the capability of making things present from itself but only when it is in the cognitive faculty). For this reason, Auriol does not assume that *species* or similitude is a sufficient condition for vision (or cognition generally) and that it is to be identified with the cognitive act wherever it is. It is important for the *species* to be received and *processed* in the suitable cognitive power of a living being. Only in this situation the similitude becomes a full-fledged cognitive act and the external object begins to appear and is perceived.⁴⁷ Hence, there are two partial causes in the elicitation of the cognitive act: firstly, the similitude of the real thing (or its *species*, in the older terminology) and secondly, the cognitive faculty itself in which the similitude resides. These things together, i.e. the faculty in-formed by the similitude, constitute a unity (*coniunctum*) that elicits the cognitive act and makes the thing appear, or, in Auriol’s words, “gives birth to the objective [component of] cognition or puts the thing into the apparent being”.⁴⁸

Both constituents of the cognitive act have their own contributions: the faculty creates the appearance (it gives the intentional being to the cognized object and determines the mode of appearing) and the similitude individuates the appearing thing (providing that precisely this and not the other thing appears).⁴⁹ When we perceive an apple in front of us, the similitude of the apple in our power of sight determines that we see precisely *this* apple and the power of sight itself determines that the apple appears to

⁴⁵ This is a problem of the traditional receptionist accounts of perception, acute e.g. in Aquinas – see Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, ch. 1.

⁴⁶ See note 20.

⁴⁷ *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 1, a. 1 (E-*Scriptum*, lin. 684–6): “[...] *sola rei similitudo non sufficit ad ponendum res in esse apparenti, nec etiam ad ponendum in esse apparenti huic, alioquin species in aere poneret colorem in esse apparenti et intentionali, [...] quod falsum est.*”

⁴⁸ *Scriptum*, d. 9, p. 1, a. 1 (E-*Scriptum*, lin. 394–7): “[...] *illud absolutum a quo oritur notitia obiectiva [est] coniunctum quoddam ex potentia intellectiva et ex similitudine ipsa. Nec enim potentia per se ipsam ponit res in esse formato, nec similitudo, aut qualitas quaecumque, sed utrumque simul parit notitiam obiectivam sive ponit res in esse apparenti [...]*” Auriol here examines more extensively the nature of the vehicle by means of which the thing appears – see *ibid.*, lin. 364–425 and the interpretation in Friedman, “Act, Species, and Appearance,” 150–4.

⁴⁹ *Quodl.* q. 8, a. 3 (X 85bD–E): “*Habet igitur species in potentia cognitiva, ut faciat apparere, quia utrumque potentia scilicet et species, constituunt unum, ad quod sequitur obiecti[va] apparentia, ita quod quia esse apparens est esse vitale, quod sit haec apparitio, est ex potentia; quod vero sit talis res sub ista apparitione, est ex specie ipsa.*”

us under certain aspect (or under the “mode of appearing”, in Auriol’s words) – i.e. as an individual red thing occupying a certain place.

Besides the language of “producing” something in apparent being,⁵⁰ Auriol deploys other terminology for expressing the activity of our cognitive powers. Following an Averroistic claim, Auriol proposes that senses are both passive and active in the sense that they receive something and then “judge” it.⁵¹ Although the ascription of the ability of judgment (*iudicare*) to the senses may seem strange to us, we should not understand such “judgments” as linguistic complexes of subjects and predicates.⁵² Rather, I contend, this ability should be understood as another expression of the activity of senses. “Judging” is an active response on the reception of *species* or similitudes; it is an active processing of the information included in the *species*. As Auriol remarks, to judge something means, for the senses, nothing other than to put it in the apparent being.⁵³

To summarize: Auriol’s account of perception is based on the conviction that the sensory faculty is active. It produces the apparent being of the object perceived and does so according to the information encoded in the similitude. The similitude is what presents the object to the faculty; it determines that this concrete object appears to the faculty etc., and is itself actively processed (or “judged”) by the sense. Thus, the perception is a result of active processing of the information in a similitude our sensory faculties receive.

Yet, what is “apparent being” precisely? I argue that *esse apparens* should be understood as an instance of the broader notion of “objective being” (*esse obiectivum*).⁵⁴ The doctrine of objective being was developed chiefly by Duns Scotus in the theological context of the issue of divine ideas and then spread among scholars of the next generation, especially Scotistic or Franciscan thinkers such as Jacob of Ascoli, William of Alnwick, Henry of Harclay, early Ockham etc. One of the most prominent contexts in which this doctrine was used was the topic of universals and relations and their

⁵⁰ This terminology is undoubtedly influenced by Auriol’s theology: there is a deep connection between psychology and Trinitarian theology in his thinking expressed by “psychological model” of the Trinity. For that issue, see Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions*, 1: 28–42, 563–93.

⁵¹ See quotation in the note 21 and Averroes, *De an.* II, comm. 149, ed. Crawford, 355–7.

⁵² For more material on the peculiar notion of “sensory judgment” in other medieval authors see K. H. Tachau, “What Senses and Intellect Do: Argument and Judgement in Late Medieval Theories of Knowledge,” in *Argumentationstheorie: Scholastische Forschungen zu den logischen und semantischen Regeln korrekten Folgerns*, ed. K. Jacobi, (Leiden, 1993), 653–68.

⁵³ *Rep.* II, d. 11, q. 3, a. 2 (X 135bA; F 50rb; P 44vb): “[...] non est enim aliud iudicare de re, quam rem in esse apparenti formare sive ipsam (F, P) in tali esse habere [...]”

⁵⁴ For similar claim, see e.g. Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, 69–70, D. Perler, “What am I thinking about?,” 72–89 and R. L. Friedman, “Peter Auriol on Intentions and Essential Predication,” in *Medieval Analyses in Language and Cognition*, eds. S. Ebbesen, R. L. Friedman (Copenhagen, 1999), 415–30.

ontological status.⁵⁵ Although there seem to be some indications that early Scotists have considered the possibility of extending the doctrine to the imagination and maybe to external senses,⁵⁶ it is highly likely that the elaborated application of the doctrine to the analysis of perception is Auriol's original contribution.

Generally speaking, the doctrine's fundamental claim is that there are two kinds of being which a thing can have: (a) real being (*esse reale*) and (b) objective being (*esse obiectivum*). The difference between (a) and (b) is dependence on a cognitive act: Whereas a thing has (a) real being *independently* of being grasped, the same thing has (b) objective being *insofar as* it is grasped by the act. Thus, the distinction is not based on the property of being (intra)mental: e.g., although cognitive acts are surely mental or psychic entities, they nevertheless have (a) real being (they are real accidents of the soul).

There are three possible combinations of these modes of being: a thing can have (i) only real being, (ii) real and objective being at the same time, (iii) only objective being. Only the latter two possibilities are interesting with respect to cognitive theory. Case (ii) concerns normal veridical cognition – the act of perception or intellection grasps an existing thing “as it really is”. In that case, the thing exists in both ways—*realiter* in the world, *objective* as the object of a cognitive act—but it is one and the same thing.⁵⁷ In case (iii), a cognitive act grasps an entity that actually does not exist. These entities can be universals (for conceptualist thinkers), relations, some imagined things, or illusory objects.⁵⁸ This does not mean that such entities are pure fictions, something we fabricate arbitrarily: they have at least some grounding in reality. For example, to have a universal

⁵⁵ For the doctrine of objective being, see e.g. M. Tweedale, “Representation in Scholastic Epistemology,” in *Representation and Objects of Thought in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. H. Lagerlund (Aldershot, 2007), 63–79, at 73–8; D. Perler, “What Are Intentional Objects? A Controversy among Early Scotists,” in *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, ed. D. Perler (Leiden, 2001), 203–226; Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis*, 1: 277–80. For general narrative see L. M. De Rijk, “A Study on the Medieval Intentionality Debate up to ca. 1350,” in: Giraldus Odonis O.F.M., *Opera philosophica*, vol. 2: *De intentionibus* (Leiden, 2005), 17–376, at esp. ch. 3.

⁵⁶ Cf. e.g. a remark made by Jacob of Ascoli: “*Esse autem obiective in anima comprehendit non solum esse obiective in intellectu, sed etiam esse obiective in imaginatione et esse obiective in quacumque potentia apprehensiva animae.*” – “Zwei Quaestiones des Jacobus de Aesculo über das Esse Obiectivum,” ed. T. Yokoyama, in *Wahrheit und Verkündigung. Michael Schmaus zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. L. Scheffczyk; W. Dettloff, R. Heinzmann, 2. vols. (München, 1967), 1: 31–74, at 43.

⁵⁷ *Scriptum*, d. 27, p. 2, a. 2 (E-Scriptum, lin. 643–4): “[...] *res posita in esse formato non est aliquid aliud quam res extra sub alio modo essendi.*”

⁵⁸ Auriol uses the doctrine of objective being in all listed cases: for universals as having only objective being see Goris, “Implicit Knowledge,” 34–8 and R. L. Friedman, “Peter Auriol on Intentions and Essential Predication”; for relations see M. Henninger, “Peter Aureoli and William of Ockham on Relations,” *Franciscan Studies* 45 (1985): 231–43; for illusory objects see section IV.

concept is to grasp an individual (this rose) under a certain aspect (in its universality). The doctrine of objective being enables us to use an act/object analysis in type (iii) cases, and to describe these entities using vocabulary we use to describe ordinary real things.

But how can we put in intentional being and consequently cognize (or—in Auriol’s case—even see) a thing that actually does not exist? How can our cognitive powers experience non-existing entities? One possible solution is to take cognitive relations as a special kind of referential relations that includes also words, signs and images. In scholastic philosophy these relations were subsumed under a common category of “denomination” (*denominatio*). So-called extrinsic denomination is naming a thing from something that is not inherent itself, but from a relation which the thing has toward something else. For example, we can use the word “portrayed” to designate Caesar due to the portrait depicting him. Similarly, in the view of some thinkers—e.g., Alnwick, Radulphus Brito or mature Ockham—“being cognized” (*esse cognitum*) simply *denominate* a thing insofar as it is being grasped by a cognitive act. The advantage of this view lies in his simplicity: there is no need to postulate more entities than the cognitive act and the real thing grasped by the act. When the real thing is lacking it does not mean that we cannot have a cognitive act about it – just as we have words that do not refer to anything or paintings that do not depict actually existing people.⁵⁹ However, Auriol explicitly denies that “being cognized” or “(being) appearing” is only an (extrinsic) denomination which the thing receives from the fact that an act external to itself grasps it.⁶⁰ In Auriol’s view, cognitive relations are peculiar kinds of relations because they include something we can call a “phenomenal ingredient”. The cognized thing *appears* to the observer; it is experienced as present and introduced to him; it seizes his attention.⁶¹

From these remarks we can conclude that when a thing is posited in apparent being and appears to the observer, “seen”, “cognized” or “appearing” are not only

⁵⁹ On Alnwick, see Tweedale, “Representation in Scholastic Epistemology,” 75–8; on Ockham, see F. Amerini, “Realism and Intentionality: Hervaeus Natalis, Peter Aureoli, and William Ockham in Discussion,” in *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century*, eds. S. F. Brown, T. Dewender, T. Kobusch (Leiden, 2009), 239–60, at 240–2.

⁶⁰ Auriol’s denial is a part of his refutation of Radulphus Brito’s theory of intentions in *Scriptum*, d. 23, a. 2 (Peter Auriol, “Scriptum super I Sent., dist. 23,” in Giraldu Odonis, *Opera philosophica*, vol. 2: *De intentionibus*, ed. L. M. De Rijk (Leiden, 2005), 695–747, at 713–715). Cf. also *Scriptum*, d. 3, q. 14, a. 3 (Buytaert II, 713, §56) and the interpretation of the latter passage in Denery, “The Appearance of Reality,” 33–5, 38–9, 44.

⁶¹ *Scriptum*, d. 23, a. 2 (ed. De Rijk, 714, §59): “*Denominari ab aliquo non est esse presens aut apparens denominanti, sed nec esse in conspectu aut prospectu ipsius, et nec illi obici aut offerri; sicut patet quod Cesar pictus non est presens aut apparens picture nec in conspectu aut prospectu illius nec sibi obicitur aut offertur. Sed experientia docet quod res cognita est apparens, presens, obiecta intelligenti necnon et in prospectu aut conspectu illius. Ergo non habet ibi solum denominari, ymo aliquod esse intentionale.*”

denominations of that thing, but rather expressions of the thing entering one's phenomenal experience. From the first-person perspective, objective being thus is exactly what brings a phenomenal and conscious aspect to our cognitive experience.

But the question remains, what is *esse apparens* from the third-person perspective? What kind of entity is that? Under what metaphysical category does it fall? The problem is that objective being seems to defy the traditional Aristotelian ontology – it is neither substance, nor accident. One might wonder whether Auriol construes objective being as a mode, similar to the early modern ontology of *res* and modes. According to this latter ontology, there are only things (whether substantial or accidental) and modes that modify these things. Modes are properties that determine the way the things are instantiated.⁶² “Appearance” then would be a *mode* of the thing cognized, something that modifies it – just as, for example, the shade is a mode which modifies the color. Nevertheless, there is one striking problem with taking *esse apparens* as the mode of the thing. Modes are *inseparable* from things they modify, not even by God's intervention. But as we have seen, objective being is *separable* from real things in entirely ordinary cases, as in the type-(iii) scenarios above, e.g. sensory illusions. Therefore, it seems that objective being is not to be conceived as a mode of being in the (early) modern metaphysical sense.

I propose instead that apparent or objective being is to be understood as involving a special kind of *relation*. Take a simple case of seeing a wall. When the activity of our sight puts the wall into apparent being, it does not add to the thing an absolute entity (*absolutum*) like quality, but only something relational, namely the relation of appearing (*apparere*). Nevertheless, this kind of relation is different from ordinary relations: in Auriol's view, ordinary relations have no existence in reality, they are brought to existence only by an operation of an intellect⁶³ and therefore are “fixed on or superimposed upon the real things”. In contrast, the relation of appearing is the *aspect* (*respectus* or *apparitio obiectiva*) under which the thing appears to us: this aspect is both “indistinguishably joined” to the thing and determined by the kind of cognitive act the thing is grasped by (the same thing appears to the sight and to the intellect differently, under different aspects). Thus, when we see the wall, an aspect under which it appears to us is given to the wall by us. Consequently, that very same wall does not have only its real being, but also the apparent being. In the process of perception our sight is tightly joined

⁶² However, such ontology is traceable at best from Suárez onwards. For a penetrating account of the category of modes in medieval and early modern philosophy, see R. Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes* 1274–1671 (Oxford, 2011), 244–75.

⁶³ Henninger, “Peter Aureoli and William of Ockham on Relations,” 234–42.

to the very thing seen and the thing receives a relation toward the sight, i.e. the relation of appearing.⁶⁴

Auriol stresses an important point here: perception or cognition (from the perspective of a cognitive power) or appearing (from the perspective of a thing grasped) is something essentially *relational*.⁶⁵ Auriol refers to a perceptual relativity in order to stress the relational nature of perception: the same thing can appear to our senses in different ways, which depends on various conditions, such as the distance of the object, the condition of our sensory organs etc. Only the set of concrete realizations of these conditions determines the concrete instance of perception, its content and veridicality.⁶⁶ Perception is thus a complex arrangement of several components: the perceiving sense, the thing perceived, the condition of medium etc. The terminology of objective or apparent being then gives us an opportunity to describe all the elements included in such cognitive situations. The cognitive situation is a fact that a thing is grasped by an act of a certain kind (e.g. the act of visual power gives *esse apparens* to the wall and the wall receives it)⁶⁷ and as a consequence it appears under certain aspect (e.g. as colored: it has the mode of appearing or that kind of *esse apparens* that gathers visual properties).⁶⁸

⁶⁴ *Scriptum*, d. 27, p. 2, a. 2 (E-*Scriptum*, lin. 583–98): “[...] visus enim, sive res praesens sit sive absens, unitur realitati sui obiecti, quam ponit in esse formato, ubi considerandum est quod res in esse formato posita non claudit in se aliquid absolutum nisi ipsam realitatem. [...] claudit tamen aliquid respectivum, videlicet apparere. Quod non debet intelligi ut affixum aut superpositum illi rei, sicut ceterae relationes, sed omnino intrinsicum et indistinguibiliter adunatum. Sic igitur, cum aliquis videt parietem sibi obiectum, paries ille non solum habet ibi esse reale, immo esse visum, iudicatum, et intentionale [...] idcirco res quae videtur, cum hoc quod realiter existit, habet etiam esse iudicatum et visum, quod quidem non ponit varietatem aliquam aut distinctionem, vel numerum cum realitate illa quantum ad aliquid absolutum, sed addit respectum illum intrinsecum et indistinguibilem, qui dicitur ‘apparitio obiectiva’.” For the similar understanding of *esse apparens*, see Friedman, “Act, Species, and Appearance,” 144.

⁶⁵ Relational understanding of the objective being is also suggested by later Scotus – see P. King, “Duns Scotus on Mental Content,” in *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302-2002*, eds. O. Bulnois, E. Karger, J.-L. Solère, G. Sondag (Turnhout, 2004), 65–88, at 87, or L. Novák, “Divine Ideas, Instants of Nature, and the Spectre of ‘verum esse secundum quid’,” *Studia Neoscholastica* 9 (2012): 185–203, at 189–90.

⁶⁶ *Scriptum*, d. 3, q. 14, a. 3 (Buytaert II, 712–3, §55). Perceptual relativity is sometimes used as an argument against direct realism – see P. Le Morvan, “Arguments against Direct Realism and How to Counter Them,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 41 (2004): 221–34, at 225–6. However, this argument is actually aimed against naïve realism, a position Auriol denies (see note 4).

⁶⁷ For the terminology of “giving” and “receiving” *esse apparens*, see *Scriptum*, d. 23, a. 2 (ed. De Rijk, 718, §70).

⁶⁸ On such a reading, it does not make good sense to ask whether *esse apparens* is a mental or extramental entity: it is both extramental (since the “bearer” of objective being is – in normal case – the extramental object which appears to us) and mental (since the cognitive act produces this objective being and is the one to whom the object appears). Cf. Denery, “The Appearance of Reality,” 36–7 for similar point.

To conclude, I propose that in order to understand objective or apparent being properly, we should distinguish between two perspectives: From the third-person (“metaphysical”) perspective, *esse apparens* expresses that there is a cognitive relation: an object *x* *appears* to an observer/cognitive power under a certain aspect. From the first-person (“phenomenological”) perspective, *esse apparens* is the object of our perception (or cognition) as a component of the phenomenal part of our cognitive experience.

In my view, this distinction is implied by Auriol himself. Let us consider whether there is a situation when the third- and the first-person perspective yield different results in ascribing a perceptual experience to a perceiver. Auriol would assert that there *is* such a situation: the phenomenon of selective attention.⁶⁹ Take the example of a person *A* and an object *x*. Although *x* is in the visual field of the person *A*, she is deep in thought about something else and does not pay attention to *x*. Should we ascribe the perception of *x* to *A*? From the third-person perspective, *A should* perceive *x* – she receives a quality or *species* from *x* and when the *species* is in *A*’s eye, it becomes a cognitive act. However, *A* does not see *x* since she is deep in thought – from the first-person perspective, she does not pay attention to *x*, which is a necessary condition for ascription of the true conscious perceptual experience. Only when she attends to *x* (which is verifiable only from the first-person perspective) does the person truly put the object in *esse apparens*. Thus, the distinction between two kinds of perspectives is present in Auriol’s thought – at least implicitly.

The question remains whether this talk about appearances does not give way, once again, to representationalism. It is worth stressing that Auriol decisively denies various kinds of representationalism. Apart from the arguments against the claim that *species* is an object of our vision (see section II), elsewhere he introduces other arguments against representationalism: an argument from skepticism (if the representationalism was true we would have no contact with the external world, only with the contents of our mind, and our knowledge would not be about things but only about “images” instead) and an argument from parsimony based on a version of Ockham’s Razor (it is not philosophical (!) to postulate a plurality of things without a

⁶⁹ *Scriptum I*, d. 35, p. 1, a. 2 (E-Scriptum, lin. 702–8). Although medieval accounts of attention have generally gained less attention of contemporary scholars than they deserve, the topic has received some consideration in the case of Aquinas – cf. Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, 134–46 for sensory attention) or T. S. Cory, “Attention, Intentionality and Mind-Reading in Aquinas’s *De malo* 16.8,” in *The Cambridge Critical Guide to Thomas Aquinas’s On Evil*, ed. M. V. Dougherty (Cambridge, forthcoming) for intellectual attention. The latter author draws a distinction between metaphysical and psychological aspects of cognitive acts which is similar to the present distinction.

reason – and there is no necessity to postulate a representation to explain cognition; the object, the power and the similitude/act suffice).⁷⁰

Given these clear anti-representationalist statements, we should not conceive Auriol's *esse apparens* as a mediator, as a mental product *by grasping which* we cognize the thing. If this were the case, "appearance" would be a cloak (*pallium*) which would veil the thing.⁷¹ Rather, appearance is an aspect (*respectus*) which is so tightly bounded to the thing that it feels as if we grasp the thing itself. Why "as if"? Because we *never* grasp an external thing exactly and fully the way it really exists. One and the same thing can appear to us in various ways, and our cognition of it is always selective to an extent. A comparison with the objective being of universals can be instructive: When we grasp a rose as a universal by a proper act of intellect, we do not grasp a mental entity which would represent all real individual roses; we rather grasp a normal individual rose, just *under a certain aspect*, i.e. under the aspect of universality. The rose appears to us in its universality, leaving aside its particular properties such as being red etc. Similarly, when we see that rose, we perceive it under an aspect of coloration, from one side, etc.

Hence, Auriol's theory of perception defends a kind of direct realism which takes at the same time into account phenomenality of perception.

IV.

Sensory Illusions. It seems that Auriol has an affinity toward a kind of direct (perceptual) realism. Nevertheless, there is a generally known argument against this view, i.e. the argument from illusion. According to this argument, from the premises (1) what we see in illusion is not a physical object and (2) illusion and perception are structurally similar entail the conclusion (3) what we see in illusion is not a physical object. In other words, we do not see physical objects directly, but by being first aware of a mediator, namely a sense datum, an idea, or a representation. Thus, the argument from illusion can be used in arguing for representationalism.⁷² In this section, it will be shown

⁷⁰ See *Scriptum*, d. 9, p. 1, a. 1 (E-Scriptum, lin. 282–302) where Auriol argues against a *forma specularis* which is both the real product and the primary object of our intellect (postulated allegedly by Dominicans Aquinas, Hervaeus Natalis and Bernard of Auvergne).

⁷¹ *Scriptum*, d. 27, p. 2, a. 2 (E-Scriptum, lin. 598–9): "Non igitur terminatur visus ad rem obiectam mediante aliquo absoluto, quasi sit aliquod pallium vel medium inter visionem et parietem qui videtur [...]"

⁷² For the analysis of the argument and similar argument from hallucination and their presuppositions, see e.g. T. Crane, *Elements of Mind. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford, 2001), 132–7. For other arguments against direct realism, see e.g. Le Morvan, "Arguments against Direct Realism".

that Auriol takes illusory experiences into consideration in his account of perception without considering them as a serious threat for his direct realist tendencies.

Firstly, let us consider Auriol's famous account of illusions. He appeals to eight (quite traditional) examples of deceptive perception: e.g. rainbow colors appear to be on a dove's neck in particular lighting, things reflected by mirrors seem to be behind these mirrors, a submerged stick seems to be broken, the twirling of a burning stick seems to leave a fire circle, etc. He also gives examples of afterimages or diplopy.⁷³ Using the elimination method, he comes to the conclusion that what we see in illusions does not exist really (*realiter*) but only intentionally (*intentionaliter*), or has an apparent being (*esse apparens*). Comparing these examples with the possible combinations of real and objective being (mentioned in the preceding section), these illusions are instances either of type (ii) (real being and objective being, although the latter one *differs* from the former in some respect, as in the case of the seemingly bent stick) and or of type (iii) (only objective being, as in the case of afterimages). Thus, Auriol deals with two different kinds of illusion at least.

Three further points can be gleaned from Auriol's account of sensory illusions:

(1) In regard to the "act" pole of the act/object dichotomy, sensory illusions are instances of perception. The cognitive act of vision (*visio*) is in the power of sight both during a veridical perception and during an illusory one.⁷⁴ The difference lies in the "object" pole of the dichotomy: The apparent being of the thing seen is produced in a defective manner in the case of illusion.

(2) Auriol seems to affirm that the illusory objects are experienced as though they were *outside* us.⁷⁵ He insists that such illusory appearances exist intentionally outside the percipient – the fire circle (made by twirling of a burning stick) is *in* the air, the images are *behind* the mirrors, apparent colors are *on* the dove's neck etc. In another place Auriol introduces the following thought experiment: when we see a wall, God could annihilate it and yet conserve our vision of that wall. In such a case, there would be the same wall seen by us: although it would have only intentional existence, it would seem to be *in* the

⁷³ *Scriptum*, d. 3, q. 14, a. 1 (Buytaert II, 696–7, §31).

⁷⁴ See Auriol's arguments against the claim that illusions take place in another cognitive power, namely that they are judgments of common sense (which was a traditional Aristotelian view) – *ibid.*, prooem., q. 2 (Buytaert I, 200–1, §89–92).

⁷⁵ Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, 69–76 already called attention to this issue.

same place where it has existed really so far.⁷⁶ Besides these examples, Auriol explicitly says that “the sight judges a terminus of its act of vision to be ... in extrinsic space”.⁷⁷

(3) The reason why Auriol refers to the illusions is not an epistemic one: he is not arguing for skepticism (senses deceive us and we should not build a theory of cognition on such “shaky foundations”), or for representationalism (illusions prove that the immediate objects of our acts are not real material objects).⁷⁸ On the contrary, Auriol uses these examples as a justification for the belief that our sensory (and, generally, cognitive) powers are essentially active and give an “apparent being” to their objects.⁷⁹

Auriol does not assume that illusory experiences are incompatible with his account of perception, which is revealed in his answers to two following questions: how an illusion emerges, and in what sense we call what we see in illusions “objects”.

The traditional strategy for answering the former question was the one employed by medieval opticians such as Alhacen or Roger Bacon. These thinkers assume that there are some preconditions that must be met if the vision is to occur at all (for example, distance between the object and the eye, transparency of the medium, sufficient magnitude and density of the visible object, healthy eye etc.).⁸⁰ If such preconditions are met, the vision is veridical, if not, the vision is inaccurate, deceptive, or does not occur at all.

Similarly, Peter Auriol analyses veridicality of vision in the terms of fulfilling a set of preconditions. For Auriol, the veridicality of vision lies in the indistinguishability of the real being of the thing seen and the apparent or intentional being that is produced by the sense according to the information in the similitude. Such a situation is achieved under

⁷⁶ *Scriptum*, d. 27, p. 2, a. 2 (E-*Scriptum*, lin. 592–4).

⁷⁷ “[...] *visus non iudicat terminum aliquem suae visionis esse in oculo, immo in spe[c]ulo, si videat per reflexionem, vel in spatio extrinsece, si videat directe.*” – *Scriptum*, d. 35, p. 2, a. 4 (X 783bC–D).

⁷⁸ Surprisingly, Auriol was often read in precisely these ways by both his contemporaries (for Chatton and Ockham see D. Perler, “Can We Trust our Senses? Fourteenth-Century Debates on Sensory Illusions,” in *Uncertain Knowledge. Scepticism, Relativism, and Doubt in the Middle Ages*, eds. D. G. Denery, K. Ghosh, N. Zeeman (Turnhout, 2014), 63–90) and modern readers. For instance, the assumption that Auriol uses argument from illusion for representationalism is explicit in J. R. Weinberg, *Ockham, Descartes, and Hume: Self-knowledge, Substance, and Causality* (Madison, 1977), 33–49 and presupposed in Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 89–104, 317. In contrast, Denery, “The Appearance of Reality,” 29–39 decisively denies that Auriol’s appealing to illusions is to be read as the argument from illusion.

⁷⁹ *Scriptum*, d. 3, q. 14, a. 1 (Buytaert II, 696–7, §31): “[...] *actus exterioris sensus ponit rem in esse intentionali, ut patet in multis experientis.*”

⁸⁰ Cf. the list of the preconditions in Alhacen, *De aspect. III, 3* (Alhacen, “De aspectibus I–III,” in *Alhacen’s Theory of Visual Perception*, ed. A. M. Smith (Philadelphia, 2001), 1–337, at 285, §3.1–3); the detailed analysis is given by Roger Bacon, *Perspectiva I*, d. 8–9 (ed. Lindberg, 108–44).

certain circumstances: the thing is present, our sensory organ—eye—is healthy, and we see under “a direct ray” (and not under a ray reflected by a mirror or refracted by lens).⁸¹ Nevertheless, we sometimes experience non-veridical vision: for example—in the case of afterimages—although the thing is already out of our sensory field, we still see it.⁸² What mechanism has such a phenomenal outcome?

Definitely, this experience does not fall under commands of our will – perception is, *ex definitione*, not controllable (in the strict sense) by the will (see section I). Rather, it is an outcome of the natural cognitive mechanism of perception that was somehow corrupted. Apparent being produced by such a corrupted process is inaccurate and does not match the real features of the thing seen. Take the example of the iridescent colors that appear to be on a dove’s neck. Auriol assumes that “these colors are nothing else than some kind of appearances produced by means of an impression made by an external thing in the sense”. The content of illusory perception is not produced arbitrarily: since the illusion is an instance of perception, it presupposes that there is an act in our sense. The act occurred in the way every perceptual act occurs: there must be an impression or similitude in the sense – “without such an impression the eye cannot judge truly or untruly”. This impression is processed (“judged”) and, consequently, the apparent being is produced. Nevertheless, the vision is not veridical and the apparent being differs from the real being (there are iridescent colors on the dove’s neck which is actually white). How has the distorted impression occurred in the eye? Auriol does not claim that there really is the real thing which would make this impression under normal circumstances (i.e. there are no *real* rainbow colors on the dove’s neck). “The impression is from a thing, albeit not from the thing I judge to be there,” concludes Auriol.⁸³ In another place, he reveals what he possibly has in mind: “the light can vary colors – not regarding the way

⁸¹ Quodl. q. 8, a. 3 (X 87bD–E): “[...] dum videtur color, non distinguamus inter esse reale coloris et suum esse visum et intentionale, tamen dum est detrahitur color et remanet visio in habentibus molles oculos, remanet etiam color secundum esse sensatum apparens et intentionale. [...] dum obiecta sunt praesenta et videntur per lineam rectam absque ullo errore, tunc esse sensatum et esse reale sunt simul in eodem situ, et tamen esse intentionale habet in reali sustentari, quamvis dum videntur per lineam fractam aut reflexam, esse sensatum, quod est esse imaginis, et esse intentionale differat et distet a vero situ rei visae.”

⁸² Remember Auriol’s claim that the actual presence of the thing is not the necessary condition for perception, only for a veridical perception – cf. *Scriptum*, prooem., q. 2, a. 3 (Buytaert I, 200, §91) and section I.

⁸³ Cf. *Rep.* II, d. 13, q. 1 (X 181aC–D; F 66va–vb; P 60va): “Non sunt ergo (igitur F) colores huiusmodi nisi quedam apparencie obiective facte quidem mediante impressione facta in sensu a re extra, qua facta res apparet aliter quam est, et ideo visiones multe possunt esse false et possunt esse de re, que non est. Non dico, quin requiratur res aliqua faciens impressionem aliquam in visu – sine tali enim impressione non potest oculus iudicare vere et (vel P) false – sed dico de re, que non est; quia iudicato resultanti ex tali impressione, non correspondet aliquid in re extra ita, quod impressio licet fiat ex aliqua re, non tamen a re, quam iudico ibi esse.”

they really exist, but regarding the way they appear”.⁸⁴ A species of light can intervene in the similitude of color received in our sense. Although the information included is distorted, the sense still does its job. The similitude is processed and transformed into the act; and the act produces *esse apparens* according to the information included. As a result, the cognitive act is illusory.

The other question is whether we can call what we perceive in illusion “objects”. Robert Pasnau has already called attention to the question of what the ontological status of such illusory appearances is.⁸⁵ He proposes two possible readings of Auriol: either these appearances are objects similar to present day abstract objects, i.e. some entities endowed by “a mysterious twilight sort of existence” and their nature is never clearly explained, or Auriol simply wants to say that *something* appears to be there because he may think that it is “useful to analyze appearances as if they were objects”. Although both readings seem unconvincing to Pasnau (Auriol is “either claiming something highly implausible or making a perfectly unexceptional claim in a highly exceptionable manner”), I assume that the latter reading of Auriol is at least plausible and that it does show his theory as having some merits.

I assume that illusory appearances are “objects” only in a broad sense of the word. Auriol himself distinguishes several senses of the phrase “object of the (cognitive) power”.⁸⁶ For our purposes, the two following meanings are significant. In the first meaning, *x* can be called the “object of an act” in the sense of a mover (*motive*), because *x* brings the faculty into actuality (*actuatur eam*) and is the moving cause (*ratio motiva*) of the act. In that meaning, the entities that affect faculties and take part in eliciting their acts are called “objects”. E. g., the redness of this apple is the object of my act of vision, because it makes an impression in my eye and this impression is turned into the act and puts the original quality into apparent being. However, in another sense, *y* is called the “object of an act” only *terminative*: although the act “terminates” at *y*, the moving cause of that act can be something completely different from *y*. E. g., we grasp apparent colors on the dove’s neck by an illusory act, but there are no such colors which would be the moving cause of the act (as was said, in such cases information in *species* was distorted in some manner). The “objects” in a terminative sense are thus something having objective

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* (X 183aD–E; F 67va; P 61rb): “[...] dico quod lux potest variare colores non quantum ad rem, sed quantum ad apparenciam. Unde si lux fuerit multum intensa, videtur quandoque color albus, ut patet in lumine solis in meridie et lumine lune (om. P), que albedo non est ibi secundum rem, sed tantum in esse iudicato (tantummodo esse mediatum? F).”

⁸⁵ Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, 74–6.

⁸⁶ *Scriptum*, d. 2, q. 10, a. 4 (Buytaert II, 544–5, §82). Auriol’s main aim in this article is the question what is the object of intellect – see Goris, “Implicit Knowledge,” 56–62 or J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: from Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez* (Leiden, 2012), 445–7.

being *without* having respective real being. On the level of senses these are illusory appearances; on the level of intellect, such “objects” would be universals, relations, privations etc.⁸⁷

Auriol’s “objects in the terminative sense” are anticipated to a certain extent in the earlier Franciscan tradition. For example, Peter Olivi affirms that external things are only terminative causes of cognitive acts, since the sole author of the acts is the cognitive power.⁸⁸ Although Auriol is more traditional regarding the veridical perception (in this case the object by means of the similitude is a partial *cause* of the act, together with the power), he is rather “Olivian” in the case of the non-veridical perception (the “objects” of such perceptual acts are objects only in the terminative sense, not in the sense of being the motive causes of these acts).

Hence, I contend that Auriol is not to be understood as speaking about full-fledged intentional *objects*, entities endowed with a special ontological status. Auriol rather seems to assert that we can talk about what appears to us as about objects having properties *regardless* of their actual existence. When we are talking about perception, the term “object” means either “the moving cause of the perceptual act” (in the third-person perspective), or “what appears to us” / “what the perceptual act ‘terminates’ at” (in the first-person perspective). Both approaches are possible in the case of veridical perception; however the *latter* one is more common in the case of illusion.

To sum up, there are two kinds of illusion: the first type when a real thing appears to be different than it really is (as in the case of the seemingly iridescent dove’s neck or the seemingly broken stick), and the second type when something that does not exist really appears to us (as in the case of afterimages, or a fire circle in the air made by twirling a burning stick or). Moreover, I assume that it is useful to distinguish between the first- and third-person perspectives. From the third-person perspective, there is a special kind of relation (the relation of “appearing”) among an object, a perceiver and the aspect under which the object appears. But to what entity does the perceiver have a relation in the case of fire circle? It may be a *possible* entity:⁸⁹ The doctrine of objective being enables us to describe what the cognitive relation between the act and the (possible) object would be, if the world were as presented by the similitude/act. From the first-person perspective: we have perceptual experiences of apparent objects or apparent properties of real objects – such as iridescent dove’s neck or fire circles being in

⁸⁷ Cf. *Scriptum*, d. 2, q. 10, a. 4 (Buytaert II, 549–50, §99).

⁸⁸ Cf. *Sent.* II, q. 72 (ed. Jansen III, 36–7) and J. Toivanen, *Perception and the Internal Senses: Peter of John Olivi on the Cognitive Functions of the Sensitive Soul*, (Leiden, 2013), 145–50.

⁸⁹ However, Auriol is not explicit about it.

the air. The reason is that the preconditions of veridical perception are not fulfilled and the perceptual process is corrupted.

Are these illusory appearances extramental? They *are*, to some extent: we can localize the mirror images using geometry, for example. What Auriol asserts is that they *appear* to be extramental. Iridescent colors seem to be extramental since the neck they appear to be in *is* extramental. Further, the constitutive feature of perception is having an object (or, at least, an “object” in the terminative sense) which is perceived as being localized in a place (see section I).

Hence, illusions are in Auriol’s view examples of defective perception. As such, they are analyzable by means of the act/object dichotomy, they even have “objects” (in the broad sense of the word). As was shown, Auriol’s reference to them is *not* intended as an argument for representationalism.

V.

This paper has argued for the thesis that Auriol’s proposes a kind of direct realist theory of perception (we perceive the real external objects directly, not by means of a mediator as representationalism asserts). Auriol’s major contribution lies in the application of the (mainly Scotistic) doctrine of objective being to the domain of sensory experience. He uses the doctrine as many others did: for preserving both direct-realist intuitions and the act/object analysis even in cases of illusion.

His strategy has some advantages. For instance, it enables him to uphold a non-naïve version of direct realism in: Being able to preserve realistic intuitions, Auriol can stress both the passive and the active moments of perceptual experience (i.e. the reception of the similitude in the faculty and its further processing here), cope with perceptual relativity (the same thing can appear to us differently under different circumstances), express the phenomenal ingredient in our cognitive states, and treat the content of illusory experience using the notions similar to the ones usually used for a description of material objects. The further advantage of the theory lies in its general applicability: every cognitive (and even appetitive) experience is analyzable as an act of the respective faculty that puts its object into apparent or objective being.

The major disadvantage of Auriol’s theory lies in the fact that it can be read skeptically: How can we be *certain* that *esse apparens* of our act’s object coincides with its real being? Such epistemic questions were raised in the next generation of scholars by, for instance, Ockham, Chatton or Wodeham.⁹⁰ Auriol seems to be unaware of such

⁹⁰ See Wood, “Adam Wodeham on Sensory Illusions,” and Perler, “Can We Trust our Senses?”

skeptical consequences of his theory of perception. As for such epistemic questions, he probably had a tendency toward a reliabilistic attitude (which was common also among the contemporary opticians): the perception is veridical as long as it is a product of a reliable and uncorrupted process.⁹¹

⁹¹ The research behind this article was supported by the Scholarship of the Jan Hus Educational Foundation and by the scholarship of the Moravian-Silesian Region (project “Podpora vědy a výzkumu v Moravskoslezském kraji 2014”, no. 02679/2014/RRC). My thanks belong especially to Dominik Perler, Hamid Taieb, Stephan Schmid and Marek Otisk who commented on earlier drafts of the paper. I am also obliged to Tobias Hoffmann who has kindly shared his copies of the manuscripts of *Rep. II* with me. Thanks also to Therese Cory and Michal Místecký for checking my English.